

Huskers Illustrated

NEWS
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Volume 21, No. 9

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n. 1. A winner of first place in a competition. 2. One who shows marked superiority.



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Nothing To Sneeze At

*Huskers build a big lead,
then turn things over to defense*



Brian Hill

IF YOU HAD taken a poll before Saturday's highly anticipated battle with Notre Dame, most everyone probably would have been happy with a 17-point victory.

The Huskers were about a two-touchdown favorite, but some experts, including CNN/Sports Illustrated college football analyst and former Nebraska player Trev Alberts were picking the Fighting Irish to pull off the upset.

The chances of that happening all but disappeared when the Huskers scored two touchdowns in 22 seconds in the first quarter. It was 17-0 at the end of the quarter and 27-3 at halftime and could have and probably should have been a lot worse.

That's why it's still a bit difficult to get a read on the 2001 Huskers.

Statistically, the defense has been very good, allowing a total of 74 yards rushing in three games and an average of 0.8 per attempt. The opponents have averaged 171 yards and 10.3 points.

The offense has definitely had its moments, such as a nine-play, 64-yard drive to open the game against Notre Dame and later a nine-play, 49-yard drive to answer the Irish's first score.

But after producing 200 yards in total offense and building a 27-3 halftime lead, Nebraska attempted only one pass after intermission and added 70 yards to its total.

"I think getting off to a great start means a great deal in any football game,

but the thing we stress to them is that we need to play four quarters," Coach Frank Solich said.

He admitted, however, to turning conservative with the comfortable lead.

"With the lead that we had, we came out and ran the ball, trying to eat up some clock at the beginning of the second half," he said. "As more time kept going off the clock, and as our defense kept controlling the game, it just seemed to make sense not to try to get too fancy or too exotic."

The bottom line is the Huskers are 3-0, and you'll find a lot more about the latest victory in this issue of Huskers Illustrated.

It was an extremely emotional week for Solich, whose father died the night before the Troy State game. The Husker coach was to attend funeral services in

Pennsylvania Sunday.

Contributing editor Mike Babcock has a nice look at the support the Huskers have given their coach during this difficult time (Final Word, Page 38).

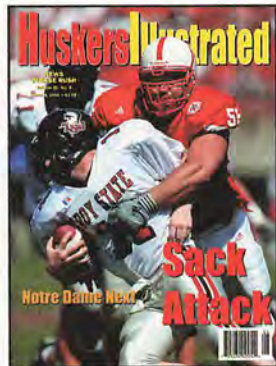
This week's feature story is a closer look at Nebraska's Millard North connection. Everyone knows about starting quarterback Eric Crouch and fullback Judd Davies, but they aren't the only Huskers from the Omaha school.

The subject of our player profile is strongside linebacker Scott Shanle from St. Edward, Neb., and our "Great Games at Memorial Stadium" series continues with a look at the Oklahoma-Nebraska game in 1963.

The Huskers have five more games to get ready for this year's showdown with the defending national champion Sooners, who are also 3-0.

The Rice, Missouri, Iowa State, Baylor and Texas Tech games should give the offense opportunities to gain consistency before the stretch run.

The potential is certainly there. ■



ON THE COVER

Middle linebacker Jamie Burrow recovers a fumble on Notre Dame's first play from scrimmage. Photo by Scott Bruhn

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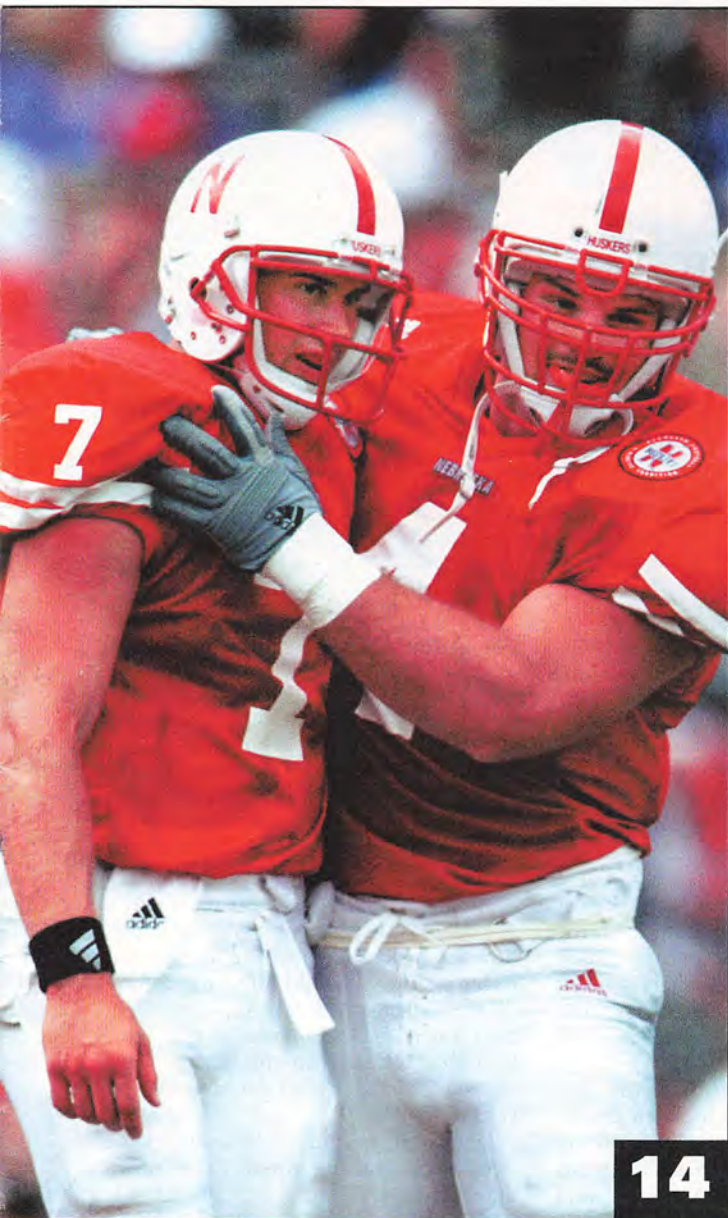
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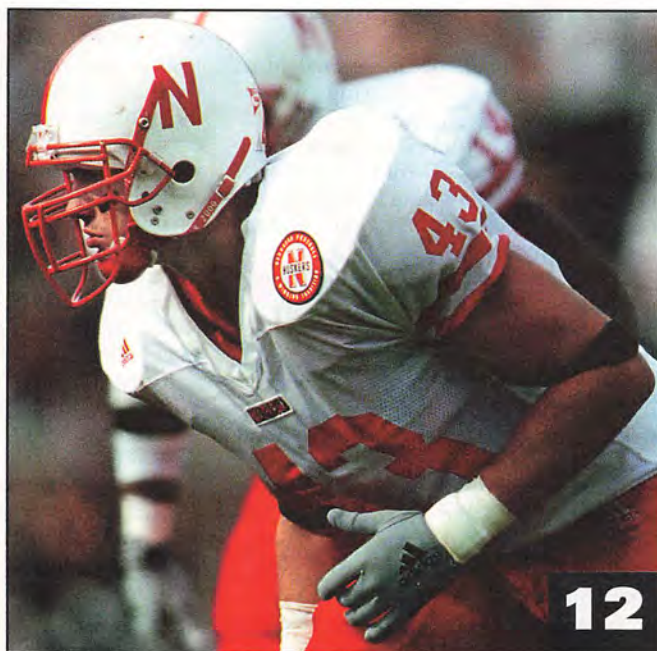
Millard North High School is well-represented on the Husker football team, with a contingent that includes quarterback Eric Crouch and fullback Judd Davies. *By Mike Babcock*

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Taking Responsibility

Even though he paid a personal price for his mistake, junior I-back Dahrran Diedrick has been able to see something positive come from his suspension for the Texas Christian game.

"Guys know now when we go out, wherever we go, we make sure there's a group of us, and if anything's going wrong, we've got to know to get out of there," Diedrick said.

"From the situation happening to me, a lot of guys are going to know, 'I don't want to miss a game. I don't want to get in trouble.' So if anything happens, even minor, guys are getting out."

And teammates have been reminded of a responsibility to help "guys to leave situations."

Diedrick had an opportunity to take himself away from the late-night situation that led to his arrest for failure to disperse and disturbing the peace, but he remained in the area.

That was "probably the most unfortunate thing about the incident," Coach Frank Solich said. "The police officer or officers did ask him to leave the area. I think he separated himself from the police officers for a period of time but then still remained in the area. Things developed from there."

Diedrick has taken responsibility for his actions that night, and he has been exceptionally forthright in answering reporters' questions before and after his one-game suspension.

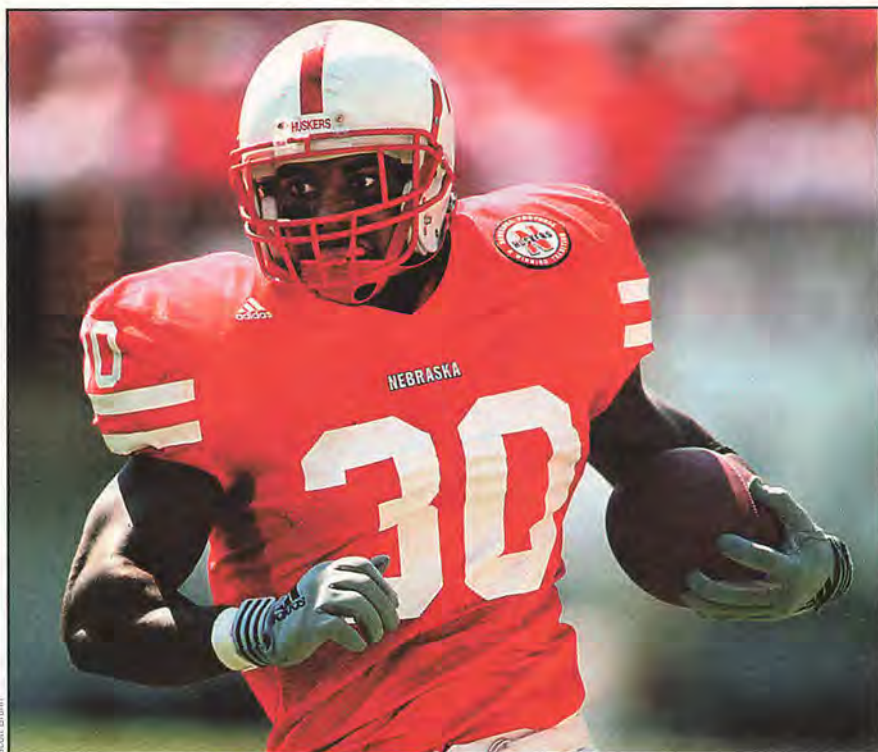
"When the incident happened, I didn't think it was going to get as big as it did," he said.

After the incident, the team had a players-only meeting during which Diedrick apologized and "told them I was sorry for getting into some trouble," said Diedrick. "I told them I was glad that they were trying to stick up for me, but whatever happens, I just had to take it on my own."

His teammates were extremely supportive, he said. In fact, he added, "I think they were too much on my side. In the meeting, they were just talking about what I did and (that) it wasn't that wrong or whatever. I didn't like that everybody was thinking about that at the time for the game."

Diedrick wanted the players' focus to be on the opener against TCU, not him, and he told them so during the meeting. "I don't want anybody else to take it on their shoulders," he said.

As a result, with the team's focus in mind, Diedrick suggested to Solich that



After sitting out the opener, Dahrran Diedrick rushed for 177 yards and three touchdowns the next week against Troy State.

he be held out of the TCU game. "It was a pretty minor scrape, but we had spoken about it as a team, and we were trying to say that nobody is allowed to get in any scrapes, minor, harsh, whatever," Diedrick said.

After off-field incidents involving I-back Thunder Collins and place-kicker Josh Brown and the dismissal from the team of Randy Stella for an unspecified violation of team rules, Solich made it clear that any further transgressions, whether minor or not, would be dealt with harshly.

In that context, Solich had little leeway in dealing with Diedrick. He couldn't make an exception. "If anything happened, Coach had to stick by his word. He couldn't just make a rule and then it depends on who broke the rule and say, 'OK, we're not going to do it this time,'" said Diedrick.

"That's why I think he made a good decision."

Even though Diedrick told Solich he should be suspended, Solich agonized over an appropriate punishment, waiting until mid-week to announce the one-game suspension.

Diedrick saw how difficult the decision was. When he suggested his sitting

out one game, Solich "didn't say, 'OK, that's a good idea.' He was still like, 'Well, I don't know,'" Diedrick said. "He said he still wanted to find out some more things before he made the decision."

"Obviously, he has the player's best interests in mind and also the team's. He knows it was my first game starting, how it would affect me. But also he had to know how it would affect the team."

If Solich made a rule and then went back on it, "some players might have thought, 'OK, if I do something, I can just say Dahrran didn't get in trouble,'" said Diedrick.

Through the ordeal, he realized the extent of his teammates' support, another positive.

But the bottom line was, "I screwed up," Diedrick said. "I have to take responsibility for it. I don't want anybody else thinking that maybe they could talk to Coach and try to get me out of it."

"There were a couple of people trying to go up to Coach and tell him what happened. I didn't want people thinking about trying to get me off. They had to think about their assignments for the game." ■

LATEST WALKONS

Transfers Chris Giacone and Chad Sievers were among the newcomers who reported for practice with the Cornhusker football team on the Monday after the Texas Christian game.

Giacone, a 5-foot-11, 190-pound quarterback in whom Nebraska showed an interest out of high school in Westfield, N.J., transferred from Mississippi State. Sievers is a 6-3, 210-pound linebacker from Valley, Neb., who played for Coach Tony Samuel at New Mexico State last season.

After watching Sievers play in the Nebraska Shrine Bowl all-star game, it was obvious "that a mistake was made there in us not offering him (a scholarship) right out of (high) school," Nebraska Coach Frank Solich said. So when Sievers got a release from New Mexico State and contacted Nebraska, "that was something we thought would be good for our program. We feel he can play here."

Giacone, who also has played defensive back, "I think is a very fine athlete, and we're glad to have him here," said Solich. Giacone sat out last season as a redshirt at Mississippi State.

Both will go on scholarship in the spring, according to Solich. But "scholarships are always based year to year, and certainly those guys understand that," he said.

Nate Ostrand, a 6-1, 270-pound defensive lineman from Omaha's Millard North High School, also transferred, from Nebraska-Omaha, where he was red-shirted as a freshman.

Giacone, Sievers and Ostrand all will be sophomores when they become eligible.

Player, Pos., Ht., Wt., Hometown (School): Peter Atha, RE, 6-4, 230, Topeka, Kan.; Cole Biodrowski, CB, 5-10, 165, Fort Calhoun, Neb.; Stephen Colon, PK, 5-11, 170, Lincoln, Neb. (Norris); Casey Foshier, RB, 6-0, 190, Lusk, Wyo. (Niobrara Co.); Jared Franzluebbbers, LB, 6-0, 210, Dodge, Neb.; Chris Giacone, QB, 5-11, 190, Westfield, N.J. (Mississippi St.); Zach Giesselmann, FB, 5-10, 200, Arlington, Texas; Adam Hassebroek, WR, 6-2, 200, Lincoln, Neb. (Lincoln High); Adam Ickes, LB, 6-1, 200, Page, Neb. (Orchard); Phillip Knip, FB, 5-10, 200, Belleville, Kan.; Brandon Koch, DL, 6-3, 235, Cozad, Neb. (Gothenburg); Sam Koch, PK, 6-1, 200, Seward, Neb.; Nathan Krug, RE, 6-5, 225; Chapman, Neb. (Nebraska Christian); Cameron Loos, OL, 6-0, 265, Lincoln, Neb. (Southeast); Nate Manley, OL, 6-3, 305, Weeping Water, Neb. (Lincoln Christian); Nanfwang Mutfwang, IB, 5-10, 190, Lincoln, Neb. (Northeast); Matt O'Shea, NT, 6-1, 260, Irving, Texas (Jesuit College Prep); Nate Ostrand, DL, 6-1, 270, Omaha, Neb. (Millard North/Nebraska-Omaha); Seth Rexilius, CB, 5-11, 165, Lincoln, Neb. (Christian); Joey Robison, FS, 5-10, 165, Bertrand, Neb.; Tyler Rowe, OL, 6-2, 275, Arlington, Texas; Steve Schermerhorn, LB, 6-3, 195, Sioux City, Iowa (Yankton); Carson Schott, OL, 6-3, 300, Osceola, Neb.; Matt Schroeder, WR, 6-4, 195, Belden, Neb. (Laurel-Concord); Bill Sedlak, OL, 6-1, 245, Lincoln, Neb. (East); Shane Siegel, FS, 6-3, 210, Grand Island, Neb.; Chad Sievers, LB, 6-3, 210, Valley, Neb. (New Mexico St.); Blake Tiedtke, CB, 5-9, 185, Cedar Rapids, Iowa (Jefferson); Tim Weltmer, FB, 6-1, 220, Smith Center, Kan.; Matthew Woodward, TE, 6-3, 215, Jefferson City, Mo.; Zach Wright, PK/P, 5-10, 155, Lincoln, Neb. (East); Dustin Zamboni, PK, 5-9, 180, Redondo Beach, Calif. (Union). ■

QUICK HITS

What's Happening In Nebraska Athletics?

COACH TURMANATOR

Former Cornhusker quarterback Matt Turman is in his first season as head football coach at Valley, Neb., High School. Turman (1994-96), who walked on from Wahoo, Neb., Neumann High, was a fan favorite. He's probably best known for starting against Kansas State in 1994, with Tommie Frazier sidelined by blood clots in a leg and Brook Berringer coming off a partially collapsed lung.

Turman's high school coach was his dad, Tim. Valley High and Wahoo Neumann are in the same classification, which means they could play each other in the state playoffs.

Matt Turman had been the offensive coordinator at Omaha's Millard West High.

COULD RETURN

Randy Stella, Nebraska's starting weakside linebacker last season, could return in 2002 if he completes work on his degree. That's what he told the Lincoln Journal Star, anyway.

Coach Frank Solich dismissed Stella from the team for an unspecified violation of team rules. But Stella told the Journal Star that he could come back and "that's No. 1 on my mind right now," he said.

"My graduation present is to get another year of eligibility to play college football for Nebraska."

Solich has declined comment on whether Stella will be allowed to return to the team.



Bobby Newcombe

NEWCOMBE RELEASED

Rookie wide receiver Bobby Newcombe, a wingback and punt returner at Nebraska, was one of two players released Sept. 5 by the Arizona Cardinals.

Both players agreed to injury settlements after being placed on the injured reserve list three days earlier, according to the Associated Press.

Newcombe was a sixth-round draft pick. He had been expected to battle for the punt returner's job but had a disappointing training camp, then was sidelined with a back injury.

(For a list of former Nebraska players on 2001 NFL rosters, see Page 25)

HUSKERS LIVE

For the first time this season, ESPN News is carrying Nebraska's weekly news conferences live, beginning with Coach Frank Solich at noon.

STILL NO. 1

The Nebraska volleyball team maintained its hold on the No. 1 ranking in the USA Today/AVCA Coaches Poll, despite dropping a four-game match at Long Beach State Sept. 1.

The 26-30, 30-28, 29-31, 25-30 setback was the Huskers' first lost since Dec. 9, 1999. The loss stopped Nebraska's consecutive wins streak at 36, which was tied for fifth all-time in NCAA history.

The Huskers play perhaps the most difficult nonconference schedule in the nation with eight ranked teams in three weeks to start the season.

"I'm very surprised that we stayed at No. 1 in the poll," NU Coach John Cook said. "If I had a vote, I would have put Long Beach State No. 1. I think they deserve it. They are a great team, and they played well against us. I don't know what else they would have had to do to take over the top spot."

TRANSFER TRIO

Three transfers were slated to join Coach Rhonda Revelle's Husker softball team when practice began on Sept. 10.

Lisa Wangler, Oregon's most valuable player last season, is an outfielder and pitcher, and a "legitimate lead-off hitter," Revelle told the Journal Star. Wangler batted .367 last season.

Liz Lawhorn, an infielder, transferred from Nebraska-Kearney, where she hit .309 with five home runs. Kristin Sullivan, a catcher, transferred from Simpson College, where she played two seasons. ■

Valuable Lesson

Guard Altstadt is more serious the second time around



**Mike
BABCOCK**

STEVE ALTSTADT would have continued answering questions about his return to the Nebraska football team if not for a more pressing matter. "I have a class," he said, rising from his chair.

Two seasons ago, when he last played for the Cornhuskers, the senior offensive guard might not have been as concerned about getting to class. And that academic disinterest nearly ended his career.

He played in every game in 1999, as Russ Hochstein's back-up and as a member of the extra-point and field goal teams. But because he let his schoolwork slide, he lost his scholarship and found himself off the team. That's the short version, anyway. His story is more complex.

After his sophomore season, with his effort in the classroom on the decline, he was told he needed to earn credits in summer-school classes in order to remain eligible, and on scholarship. "Then I came down with mono, and I wasn't able to attend class," he said. "That's how I dropped out."

Lest that be not harsh enough, he immediately replaced "dropped out" with "failed."

Early last season, still feeling the debilitating effects of the mono, a discouraged Altstadt met with Coach Frank Solich to discuss his options.

Solich told him if he were to get his grades in order, "he would accept me back on the team," said Altstadt. "That was my goal, to be back."

His parents went with him to the meeting, allaying his concern that he had let them down. "I think they were more proud I was back on, that Coach Solich gave me that option," he said.

He was out of school for two semesters, during which he recovered from the mono and began working out at a Gold's Gym to get back into shape. During one stretch, he lost about 60 pounds in two weeks because of the mono, he said. The effects lingered until nearly Christmas time.

"I was sick about every other day," he said. "I was constantly up and down."

In retrospect, he probably wouldn't have been able to play even if he had been eligible. In any case, he really kicked his training into gear in January. Since he couldn't work out with his teammates because he wasn't enrolled in classes, his motivation had to come entirely from within.

Last spring, with the mono finally cleared up, he worked a part-time job as a server at a chain restaurant in Lincoln. "That was just some quick, easy money," he said.

But then, the economics of football have changed, too. He's a walk-on now.

Although he couldn't train with them until the summer, after he enrolled in classes, he maintained contact with his

teammates. And as he began working himself back into shape, "I could tell I was earning their respect," he said. "I had to earn their respect, so I had to do all the little extras."

His classroom problems were aggravated by his living arrangement, he said. His roommates "weren't so dedicated." If he was to come back, "I had to associate myself with some other people."

To that end, he moved in with former Cornhusker Tyrone Uhler, who is serving as an undergraduate assistant now after his playing career was cut short because of a serious neck injury.

Uhler, a walk-on from Battle Creek, Neb., who was establishing himself at fullback before the injury, is "pretty focused," said Altstadt. "He's up in the morning, and I get myself up in the morning, going. It seems like everybody's doing something. I've got a whole different crowd at the house."

Uhler's influence has been an important element of Altstadt's comeback.

"He keeps me in line," Altstadt said. "He doesn't want me to lose what he lost."

Perhaps the most dramatic evidence of Altstadt's renewed commitment was the fact that his name was listed second at left guard, behind Tionni Fonoti, on the depth chart posted after the entire team reported for practice the week following the Texas Christian game.

"He's going to be ready to contribute early," Solich told reporters after Altstadt's second practice. He might be a bit rusty, but "he retained a lot. It's amazing how much he retained."

Even though he couldn't participate or attend meetings, Altstadt was a regular at practices during the spring and two-a-days, eagerly watching. "I still knew what I had to do," he said.

"It's still all pretty fresh in my mind. I've been here four years; I can't forget it."

He earned the credits in summer school to be reinstated, and suited up for the TCU game. "That just meant so much, running out of the tunnel again," he said. "That feeling, it's unbelievable."

A new perspective fuels Altstadt's renewed enthusiasm. In the past, "the side issues always kept me a little back," he said. Schoolwork was at the top of the list of those "side issues." It's no longer on the side. Rather, it has become "extremely important to me, taking care of all the little things," he said.

Altstadt has learned a valuable lesson in the last year or so, one that applies to many things in life, not just football. "You don't know what you have 'til you don't have it any more," he said.

That might sound trite. But he knows it's true. ■



Steve Altstadt is back in the offensive line picture.

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Eyes On The Prize

Huskers have mastered the art of taking it one game at a time



Terry DOUGLASS

There's an old saying in the world of journalism: If your mother says she loves you, check it out. Of course that old J-school axiom isn't intended to make anyone seriously question their maternal relationship but rather to remind those in the media business to never take anything for granted.

When it comes to leaving nothing to chance, perhaps reporters everywhere could take a few pointers from the Nebraska football team. From the top down, the Cornhusker program has traditionally maintained a tremendously consistent focus week in and week out.

Go ahead. Just try and get a Nebraska player to admit that he's looking past a team and is eyeing another so-called big game. It's a daunting task.

In the moments following the Huskers' 42-14 victory over Troy State, Nebraska senior quarterback Eric Crouch was asked by a reporter to fess up. Surely, the much-anticipated matchup with Notre Dame had been his main focus since fall camp began, right? It's only human nature. Well, if he was looking ahead, Crouch wasn't about to let anyone know.

"We just focus on whoever is next on the list, and we prepare for them," Crouch said. "I didn't think about Notre Dame one time all week long (before playing Troy State). It didn't even cross my mind once. The first time you find yourself thinking about a team that you're not playing, they can kind of creep up on you and can do some damage."

Tight end Tracey Wistrom said that Nebraska's ability to remain focused on the opponent at hand is ingrained in players from Day One in the program. Seldom does anyone on the team need to be reminded of how the Huskers are expected to approach each and every game.

"It's kind of unspoken," Wistrom said. "Especially as competitive as Division I football is right now. You overlook an opponent, and it's usually going to come back and haunt you. I think we've learned that in the past."

Surely it isn't easy to stay sharp in practice and play at the top level when you're wading through a series of underdogs on your schedule to get to teams like Notre Dame, Oklahoma and Kansas State. Not so, says Huskers linebacker Scott Shanle, who made the ever popular observation that scholarship limits have spread out the talent pool more so than in past years.

"In this day and age in college football, no matter who you play, they have athletes, and they've got people that can make plays," Shanle said. "It's not like it used to be where you could look past a team and still go and blow them out by 70 points."

Nebraska rush end Chris Kelsay insists that looking past opponents, no matter how big the next game may be, simply isn't what the Nebraska football program is all about. Never mind the fact that in the days leading up to the Huskers' game against NCAA Division I-A newcomer Troy

State, Kelsay was asked numerous times on campus, "Who are you playing Saturday?"

"We don't look at it like that at all," Kelsay said. "We prepare game in, game out. We take it one play at a time, one game at a time, and that's something we always focus on."

"It's games like Troy State where an opponent comes in and really surprises you if you're not ready and you're sitting back on your heels."

Ironically, Nebraska split end Wilson Thomas said that his healthy respect for each and every opponent was reinforced by his stint with the Huskers basketball team last season. Being a competitor on a team that became all too familiar with the underdog role, Thomas said he gained some perspective into the mindset of Husker football opponents. He came to realize that underdogs often fight twice as hard and deserve to be feared and respected.

"It gave me a different outlook on things," Thomas said. "I learned a lot being a competitor who wasn't on a dominant team that established itself like Nebraska has in football. That experience showed me how to struggle and work hard and never let down. Before, I might have had more of a tendency to get lackadaisical."

It may sound to some that the Huskers get overly concerned about playing teams that they are supposed to have put away by halftime. However, Coach Frank Solich said it's that same unassuming approach that has limited Nebraska to three losses to unranked opponents — Texas in 1996 and 1998 and Iowa State in 1992 — in the past 10 seasons.

"We address every football team we play the same way," Solich said. "Every time we step on the field, our football team respects the opponent."

That's not to say the Huskers win every game that they're expected to. Nebraska has only been an underdog once in Solich's four years as head coach (at Kansas State in '98). However, it does illustrate that with upsets occurring in the Top 25 almost every week of the season, NU has had a knack of avoiding truly shocking losses. The '92 setback at Iowa State was Nebraska's only loss to a team that finished its season with a record below .500 in the Tom Osborne-Solich era, which dates back to 1973.

As far as the Huskers are concerned, looking ahead and picking out big games on the schedule is something best left to the fans and the media.

As Thomas points out, often the true measure of what is classified as a big game isn't determined until after the game is played.

"We can't allow the fans to take our focus away," Thomas said. "We have to come out and perform each game. They can look by people and say what games are the big games. No matter who you play, it becomes a big game if you lose it. Some people may look ahead, but I'm not one of them." ■



Tracey Wistrom says the Huskers approach each game the same.

Terry Douglass is the sports editor of the Grand Island Independent. He can be reached at tdbbdouglass@netzero.net.

The Future Looks Bright

Young talent reminds Coach Van Horn of first year in Husker baseball program



Curt McKEEVER

THERE WAS MORE BUILDUP to Nebraska playing Rice in Buck Beltzer Stadium for last June's NCAA Super Regional than there is about this week's Cornhusker-Owl matchup in Memorial Stadium, so let's take a break from football and head out to Haymarket Park.

From Dave Van Horn's office view down the left-field line, there's a lot to anticipate with fall practice set to begin next week.

Van Horn, named Baseball America's national coach of the year in 2001 after guiding NU to its first College World Series, says the young talent on his fifth team brings back memories of how he and his staff began to build the Husker program into a national power.

Included in his latest 24-member recruiting class are 16 freshmen — four of whom were named by Baseball America as their respective state's top high school player last season. There are also five Major League draft picks.

"This reminds me of our first year here, when we got (John) Cole and (Adam) Stern and (Will) Bolt and (Shane) Komine," Van Horn said . . . "just a group of young guys that were very athletic and developed real quick."

"We're hoping that some of these freshmen will come in and solidify, at the very least, a back-up role, with a chance to platoon and play and gain a lot of experience (and) help us win a championship."

Stern and Cole, juniors last season, were chosen in the third and fourth rounds of the draft, respectively, and turned professional. Komine was a 19th-round pick who chose to return for his senior season, along with Bolt, a steady three-year starter in the middle infield.

The Huskers' newest future stars might come from the quartet of 2001 state prep players of the year.

Joe Simokaitis is an infielder from St. Louis. Daniel Bruce, an outfielder from Millard West, will be in contention for a starting spot. Right-handed pitcher Casey Jorgensen, from Sioux Falls, S.D., struck out 22 in an American Legion game this summer. And Phil Shirek, a right-hander from Minot, N.D., tied an American Legion national tournament record by fanning 20.

Van Horn noted the St. Louis Cardinals made a strong pitch to sign Shirek to a free-agent contract the week before Nebraska classes began.

"We saw him last summer at the end of the year, and he was very good. We were hoping that nobody would see him," Van Horn said. "Well, then he struck out 170 in 90 innings this summer."

Shirek turned down a six-figure offer from the Cardinals in order to play at least three seasons at Nebraska.

Two juniors and three sophomores also opted to join the Huskers instead of signing after being drafted in June.

The juniors are third baseman Marcellus Dawson and outfielder Adam Riddle.

Dawson, from Muscatine (Iowa) Community College, was taken in round 38 and ended up at Nebraska after originally committing to Iowa State, which dropped its program. Riddle, one of two recruits from New Mexico Junior College, was a 36th-round pick after leading the JUCO ranks with a .560 batting average and 32 doubles.

The three sophomore draft picks are catcher John Grose (42nd round), catcher/first baseman Curtis Ledbetter (39th round) and left-handed pitcher Aaron Marsden (34th round).

Ledbetter, from Lawrence, Kan., and Dawson, from Milwaukee, also were their respective state's high school players of the year as seniors.

Heading into fall practice, the veteran position players who appear to have good grips on starting spots are center fielder Jeff Leise, Bolt at second base and Matt Hopper, a two-time All-Big 12 designated hitter moving to first.

Nebraska's other recruit from New Mexico JC, Josh Birmingham, hit .430 last season and will be a top candidate at shortstop.

The All-American Komine — 31-8 in his career — leads the way on the mound. Nebraska will have to replace postseason star R.D. Spiehs, who signed late with San Francisco, and last year's closer, Thom Ott, who is with the Los Angeles Dodgers organization.

Junior left-hander Jamie Rodrigue, who recently underwent arthroscopic knee surgery but was expected to go through fall practice, will have a good chance to grab the No. 2 starter role. Nebraska's next closer could be J.D. Scholten, a 6-foot-6 right-hander who transferred from NCAA Division II Morningside (Iowa) College.

"His dad was the head baseball coach. He's leaving, and he wants his son to come to Nebraska where he can get a little more exposure," Van Horn said.

Scholten can hit the lower 90s on the radar guy and, according to Van Horn, "throws a heavy ball with a lot of sink. He gets ground balls, and he's got some life in his arm."

Van Horn will work with a 49-player roster to begin fall practice but said that will be whittled to 37 or 38 (including five or six redshirts) by the time the season opens in February.

You can check out Nebraska's new talent during the annual Red-White fall series, scheduled to be held the final five days of practice the week of Oct. 15. NU also is holding an alumni game this Saturday — which just might prove to be more competitive than the action in Memorial Stadium. ■



Dave Van Horn was Baseball America's coach of the year for 2001.

Curt McKeever is a sportswriter, covering the University of Nebraska for the Lincoln Journal Star. In addition to reporting on football he is the primary beat writer for the men's basketball and baseball teams.

A Different Player

**Junior linebacker
Shanle enjoys
playing pain-free**

The pain of an abdominal injury, all-too-common among Nebraska football players, was Scott Shanle's constant companion last season. But he continued to play without complaint.

The injury — athletic pubalgia — bothered him for the better part of a year, which meant it also hampered his off-season training, limiting the amount of lifting he was able to do.

"It was a huge nuisance," the junior strongside linebacker from St. Edward, Neb., said. "It's the type of injury where you can still play and run, but you just can't do it as fast. You can't run as fast. Your lateral movement isn't as sharp because there's pain... really annoying pain."

Shanle didn't miss any games because of the injury. He played in every one and started all but three including the Alamo Bowl game, finishing as the team's fifth-leading tackler with 55.

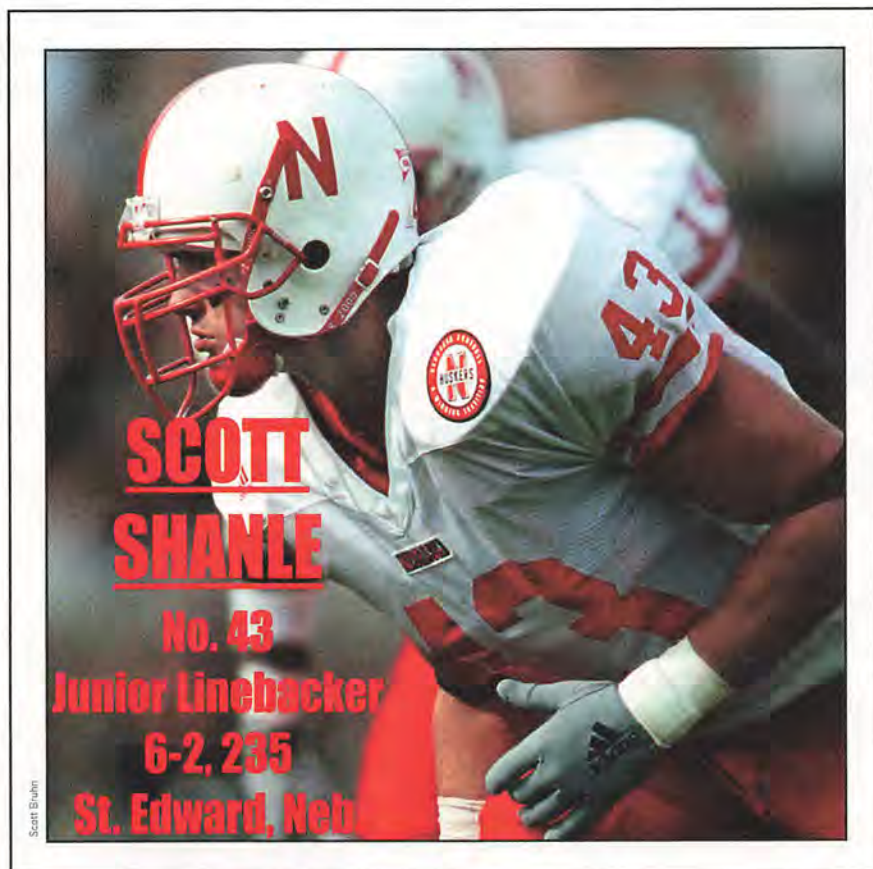
He was on a restricted lifting program because of the injury and "wasn't able to turn certain ways on bursts," said defensive coordinator and linebackers coach Craig Bohl. "When you cover man-to-man on the tight end, you've got to have that. He worked through it, but he just didn't have his burst."

Although Shanle didn't have the burst he has now, he continued to play.

Injured or not, "he was the best player we had (at the position)," Bohl said.

Shanle is still the best strongside linebacker the Cornhuskers have. And now he's healthy. The effects of the abdominal problem have faded, allowing him to rely on his athleticism and speed.

Fluid movement, "he had that all the time," said Bohl. "The thing is, he's stronger now and he understands our defense better, so he's playing more aggressively."



He's stronger because he's been able to lift regularly. And he understands the defense better because this is his fourth year at Nebraska, after walking on from an eight-man high school program.

The abdominal pain was gone last spring, and "I felt like a different player," Shanle said. "I've lifted a lot harder. I think I've gotten a lot stronger and put on a lot more muscle."

At the beginning of pre-season practice, he was the heaviest he has ever been, weighing in at over 230 pounds. Players typically lose weight practicing twice a day in the August heat, however.

"I didn't want to go into two-a-days at 220 and come out at 210," he said.

Shanle has felt like a different player since last spring. And he looked like a much different player from early July until about a week before the start of two-a-day practices.

Around the Fourth of July, he bleached his hair blonde. It altered his appearance so much that teammate

Jamie Burrow didn't recognize him. Granted, Burrow only saw him from a distance, during a weekend at Lake Okoboji in Iowa. Jamie's brother Dan also saw him. But neither knew him.

"That guy looks exactly like Scott Shanle," Jamie told Dan.

The next time he saw Shanle, Jamie Burrow said, recalling the encounter during two-a-days, he was going to suggest that Shanle bleach his hair "because it looked pretty good."

Burrow was surprised when Shanle told him he had been at Lake Okoboji, too.

In any case, the bleached look was never meant to be permanent. Shanle knew he was going to shave his head before reporting for practice, "so I decided I'd have a little bit of fun with it," he said.

The coaches "didn't say a whole lot. I didn't get quite the reaction I hoped I'd get," he said. "I thought they'd say a little bit more. But I kind of told them I was going to get rid of it, anyway."

It has become something of a tradi-

tion among defensive players, particularly those on the top units, to shave their heads as a sign of unity. And most did this year — though a few are letting it grow back.

Burrow is among those few. However, he did agree to shave seven or eight months' worth of hair before practice began. "When we told him that he had to shave it, he wasn't too up for it," said Shanle. "But then the next day he came back with it shaved, so I guess he was with the unity thing."

"My freshman year, a lot of guys did it. Last year, we didn't really do it too much."

Shanle, who played mostly on kicking teams as a redshirted freshman, has improved markedly since then. Some of that is a result of maturity. He's more developed in the upper body, for example. But "the real difference is what he's been able to do with his lower body," Bohl said.

"He seemed to lose a little bit of his step last year from what he had the previous year."

The abdominal injury was the reason, and when it cleared up, "I felt like a different player," said Shanle. "The first time I had no pain, I just felt like a totally different player." ■

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Still Tea



Millard North products still together as Cornhuskers

By Mike Babcock

Eric Crouch wasn't the most popular guy in his neighborhood during the time he attended Omaha's Millard North High School. And that was because of his athletic success.

The problem wasn't arrogance. Far from it. Crouch has never been aloof. "He was approachable," said Judd Davies, a sophomore at Millard North when Crouch was a senior.

Mic Boettner also will testify to that. He has been Crouch's teammate since they were high school freshmen. Crouch will be a groomsman when he gets married in May, in fact.

And the opportunity to be Crouch's teammate for five more years at Nebraska has been a factor in his not quitting. "It's been a lot of fun watching him do the things he does," Boettner said.

"Does his success surprise me? Not at all. I've seen him do more things in nine years of practices and games than a lot of people have, and really, nothing surprises me anymore."

When Nebraska fell behind Colorado 32-31 with 47 seconds remaining last season, for example, Boettner saw a Millard North coach standing by the fence behind the Cornhusker bench.

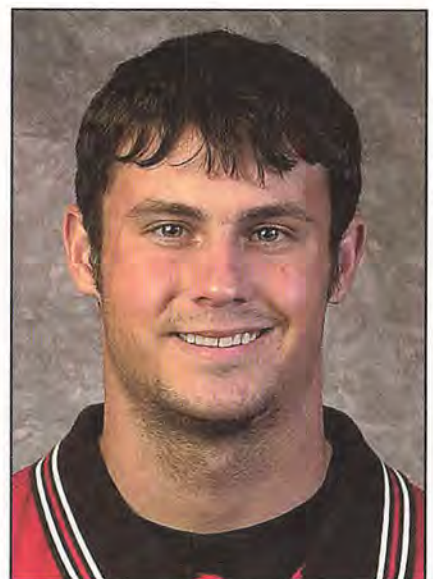
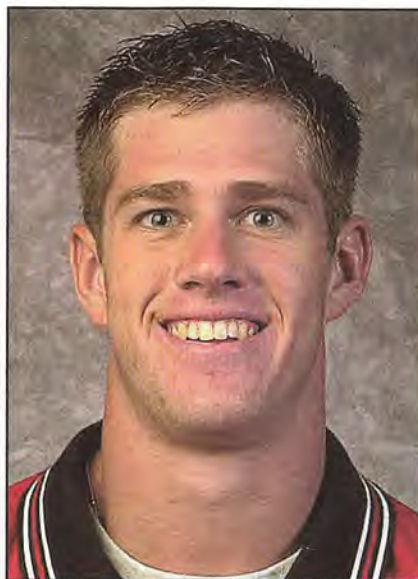
"How do you feel about it?" the coach wanted to know.

"Look who the quarterback is," Boettner replied.

"No doubt at all, we're going to

Nebraska's starting quarterback Eric Crouch (left) and fullback Judd Davies also started in the same backfield at Millard North, when Crouch was a senior and Davies a sophomore in 1996.

mmates



Millard North products on the Nebraska football team include (from left) senior rover Mic Boettner (left), sophomore cornerback Pat Ricketts and freshman quarterback Mike McLaughlin.

win this thing," the coach said.

Crouch completed four-of-five passes to move Nebraska 47 yards and set up Josh Brown's winning field goal as the final seconds elapsed. "I never doubt him," Boettner said of Crouch. "I've never had any doubts about what he could do. It's just total confidence in everything he does."

Anyway, one time before a football game against rival Millard South, some of Crouch's friends spent the night in a sport utility vehicle, parked just down the street from his house.

They wanted to "make sure nothing was going to happen," Crouch recalled with a laugh.

There had been incidents, fairly harmless pranks, barricades on the lawn, graffiti in chalk and paint on the driveway, even eggs tossed at the house. And the perpetrators were believed to be Millard South students. "But that's high school," Crouch said. "That's what high school kids do."

"I look back on it now, and I don't hold any grudges."

That Crouch was the star quarterback for a rival high school was reason enough to target his house. But the situation was further aggravated



by the fact he lived in the Millard South district.

He had received permission to attend Millard North. At the time, he was interested in becoming an architect, and "Millard North really had a great architecture program," he said.

Of equal, or more, importance was the football program, and specifically its option offense. Even then, Crouch envisioned himself as an option quarterback. So he chose Millard North, where Todd Doxzon, an outstanding option quarterback who played at Iowa State, was finishing his career.

"It was a wise decision," he said. "I've never looked back on it."

Millard North is well represented on this season's Cornhusker football team. The roster includes six former Mustangs. In addition to Crouch, Davies and Boettner, Pat Ricketts, Mike McLaughlin and Nate Ostrand, a transfer from Nebraska-Omaha, are products of Coach Fred Petito's program.

Boettner is a back-up rover. Ricketts is a cornerback and starter at nickel back. McLaughlin is a quarterback, and Ostrand is a defensive lineman — both are redshirts this season.

Crouch and Davies are backfield starters, as they were at Millard North in 1996. Davies, a sophomore fullback, credits Crouch for contributing to his development in high school.

"He had so much build-up around him. When you're a sophomore in high school and you're taking hand-offs from Eric, you know . . . I felt a lot of pressure," Davies said.

"It probably made me a lot better because he ran everything. He had such speed. I had to grow up quickly. I didn't want to screw up because he'd probably get mad at me."

That was his thinking as an

impressionistic sophomore. In retrospect, Crouch "never really got on anybody individually," said Davies. "It was kind of the way he leads here. Everybody respected how good he was and how hard he worked. That was that. He ran the show."

Respect and hard work are cornerstones of Petito's successful program, according to those who have played for him. "One thing you notice about Millard North guys is how hard we work, and, I think, a lot of toughness," Davies said. "None of us are complainers about injuries or playing time."

"We just go out, we do our thing. We hustle. That's maybe part inside you. But I think a lot of it is from Millard North, from the coaching staff, from Coach Petito."

Ricketts, who moved back to Omaha from Wichita, Kan., before his sophomore year in high school, agrees. "They teach you to work hard, no matter what happens, to stick with it," he said.

That mentality has kept Boettner, a senior walk-on, from quitting, despite limited playing time. He also was a senior at Millard North when Davies was a sophomore. "I knew Mic would stick around," said Davies. "Mic never complains about

a situation. He's going to make the best of it."

The roots of Boettner's perseverance extend to Millard North, where he was a first-team all-state and academic all-state defensive back as a senior. Petito and his staff stressed resilience.

"It was always, if you have a bad game, you've got to come back and work even harder," Boettner said. "Even if you had a bad play, you weren't going to get down on yourself."

"You had to come back and fight through it. That's the situation I'm in here, where things haven't always gone the best for me on the field. But I'm going to hang around and stick it out."

Petito encouraged him to walk on at Nebraska, even though smaller schools offered scholarship aid. "He told me, 'You probably aren't going to get another chance like this,'" said Boettner.

Boettner told Ricketts, who also walked on, the same thing. Ricketts was receptive, having been born in Nebraska and grown up with parents who were Cornhusker fans.

"If I had the opportunity, I was going to come here and prove that I could do it," Ricketts said. "I don't

think I could live with not knowing. I didn't want to have any what ifs."

Ricketts and Davies, varsity teammates at Millard North as juniors and seniors, room together on the road and keep tabs on the Mustangs' football fortunes. All of them do.

They car-pooled to Omaha for the Mustangs' Thursday night season opener against Lincoln Northeast. "We try to go back, talk to the coaches, watch the game a little," said Ricketts.

Crouch maintains regular contact with Petito "because he's more than a football coach to me. He's a good friend," Crouch said. "Some of the things he's done for me through the years, and for a lot of players who have come through the system, have helped so much. He's been there for me. I have a lot of respect for him, the way he teaches football and the way he teaches the game of life."

The allegiance to Millard North those Cornhuskers share is hardly unique. Most players retain an interest, if not affection, for the high school programs from which they came.

"There's a big sense of family," said Boettner.

Crouch echoes that. "It's like a family," he said. "It really is." ■

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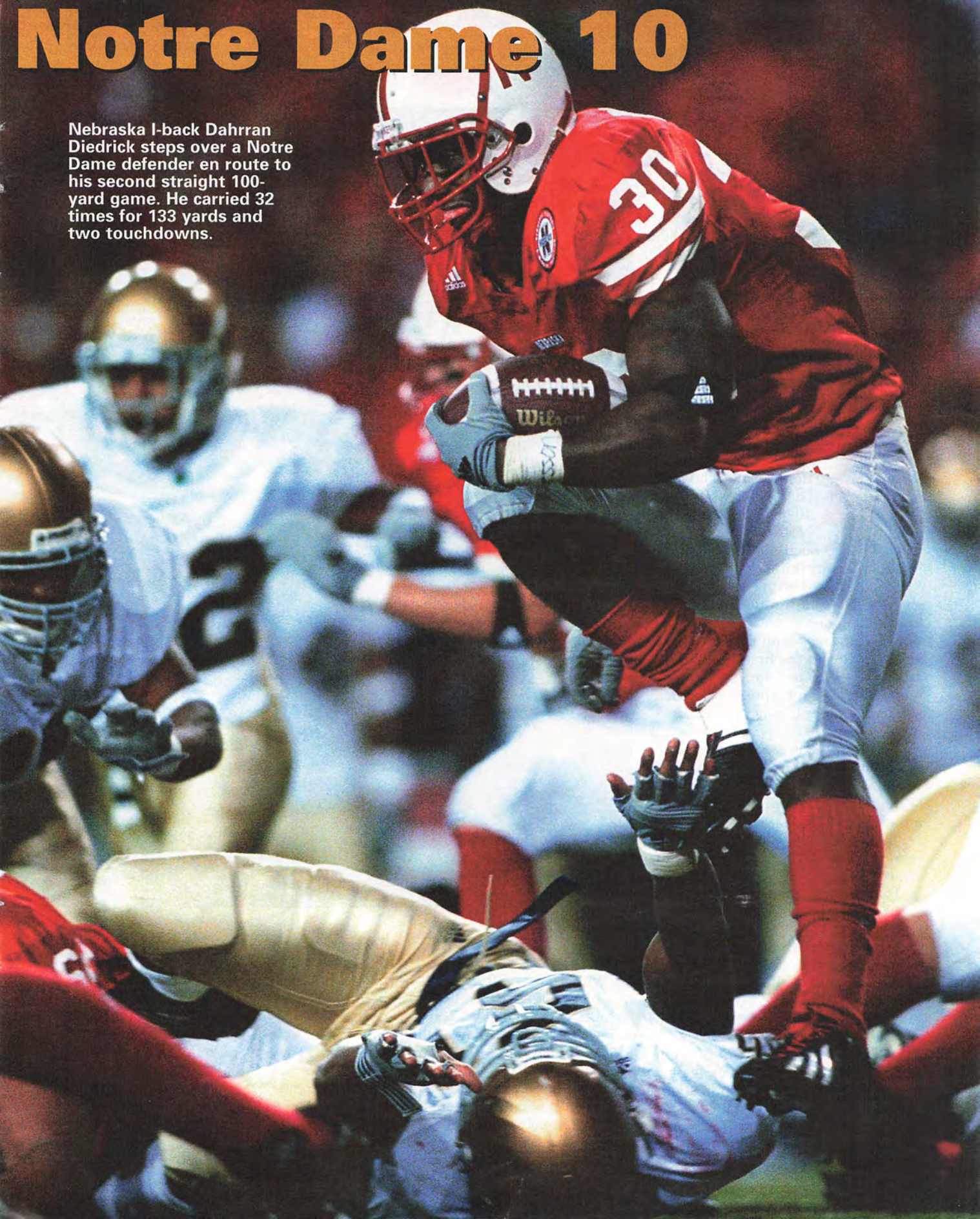


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Nebraska 27

Notre Dame 10

Nebraska I-back Dahrran Diedrick steps over a Notre Dame defender en route to his second straight 100-yard game. He carried 32 times for 133 yards and two touchdowns.



Putting It on

Inspired Huskers start fast vs. Irish

By Mike Babcock
Photos by
Scott Bruhn

A viewer survey on a local television station during the week before Nebraska's 27-10 victory against Notre Dame irritated Dave Volk to such a degree that he had to say something.

So on Thursday the senior offensive tackle "said a little something" to his linemates.

The Cornhusker offense struggled at times during the first two games, and the viewer survey placed responsibility for those struggles squarely on the shoulders of the linemen.

The "heat" on the offensive line wasn't limited to the survey. But that was the catalyst for Volk's reaction. "I'm getting tired of it, when people are saying we were weak," he said.

"I know these guys. They're hard-working. There's never been a lack of effort."

That's not to say there hasn't been room for improvement. And there still is.

But the offensive line has three new starters, and "it takes a little bit of time," said Volk. "If we keep improving like we've been improving, we're going to be real, real tough."

Although the consistency might not have been there just yet against Notre Dame, there were indications of what the offensive line can do. The Cornhuskers put together a nine-play, 64-yard touchdown drive on their first possession to provide a



glimpse of the previously missing power game.

With a 27-3 halftime lead, however, Nebraska Coach Frank Solich admittedly became conservative offensively. "Our play calling was dictating that the clock get eaten up," Solich said.

"I think our offense did all they could with what they were handed."

Eric Crouch threw just one pass in the second half, and it was incomplete. Otherwise, the Cornhuskers

simply lined up and ran at Notre Dame, which aggravated the situation by questioning Nebraska's offensive line. "Some of the Notre Dame players were talking, too," said Volk.

"They were talking about their tradition . . . that we should be scared of them."

The nationally televised game was one of traditions colliding. But the collision didn't produce the drama a record Memorial Stadium

the Line



crowd of 78,118 might have expected.

Less than five minutes into the game, Nebraska led 14-0. And if the Cornhuskers had played with the edge they showed during that early stretch, it could have gotten completely out of hand. Notre Dame Coach Bob Davie said his team "had that deer in the headlights look." And no one argued the point.

"We got a little bit better in the second half, but still not enough to

Nebraska cornerback Lornell McPherson (partially hidden) and linebacker Barrett Ruud (38) drag down Notre Dame's Tony Fisher for a 1-yard loss.

win at this level," he said.

In retrospect, Nebraska, which had dropped from fourth to fifth in the Associated Press rankings following a 42-14 victory against Troy State, had an advantage, having played two games to Notre Dame's none. "Adjusting to the speed of the game, not having played a game, I was worried about the first drive on defense," said Davie. "Nebraska takes it down and scores."

The Cornhuskers had three runs of 11 or more yards on the drive.

Then Notre Dame lost a fumble on its first play from scrimmage to set up a second touchdown. "Are you kidding me? Are you kidding me?" Davie said, sounding like Dick Vitale. "A team that turned the ball over eight times all last year, the first play of the 2001 season we put the ball on the ground."

Later in the first quarter, the ball was snapped over Notre Dame punter Joey Hildbold's head, and rush end Justin Smith scooped it up and returned it 7 yards to the Irish 8-yard line.

Though the Cornhuskers couldn't punch it into the end zone, redshirted freshman Sandro DeAngelis came on to kick the first of two field goals, and they were on their way to victory.

After Nebraska scored 10 more points in the second quarter, Solich was ready to back off. As a result, "we probably did not give our offense a real fair shake in the second half," he said.

"It just seemed to make sense not to try to get too fancy, too exotic."

The Cornhuskers' Kyle Larson punted five times in the second half and had one punt blocked. The ball was recovered at the Nebraska 4-yard line to set up Notre Dame's only touchdown.

By then, however, there was little suspense.

The Cornhuskers relied heavily on I-back Dahrnan Diedrick, who rushed for 133 yards and two touch-

Husker Player of the Game



Jamie Burrow

Blackshirts Limit Irish

A shutout would have been nice, but "we're happy with 27-10," Jamie Burrow said.

Nebraska's senior middle linebacker did his part, contributing 11 tackles, including two for losses, and recovering a fumble to set up the Huskers' second touchdown.

Rush end Demoiné Adams forced the fumble, which Burrow recovered at the Notre Dame 22-yard line with 10:24 left in the first quarter. On the first play from scrimmage after that, quarterback Eric Crouch passed to wingback John Gibson for the touchdown, producing a 14-0 lead.

The defense limited Notre Dame to 43 yards rushing. "One thing the Blackshirts always take pride in is stopping the run," said Burrow. "We feel that there is no one in the country who can run on us if we come with our 'A' game and we're playing the way we're capable of playing."

The Fighting Irish weren't much more successful throwing the ball. "We set a goal of keeping them under 225 yards of total offense, and we did better than that," Burrow said.

Notre Dame finished with 162 total yards. ■



Nebraska cornerback Keyuo Craver stops Notre Dame receiver David Givens (above) for no gain in the second quarter. The defense limited the Irish to 43 yards in total offense in the first half. The Huskers dedicated the game to Coach Frank Solich (leading the team onto the field, right), whose father died on the Friday before they played Troy State.



downs on 32 carries. Rick Berns (against Missouri in 1978) and Lawrence Phillips (against Kansas State in 1994) share the school record for carries in a game, with 36.

"He was fine after the game," Volk said of Diedrick. "He can carry it 40 times."

Notre Dame sputtered offensively under the direction of quarterbacks Matt LoVecchio and Carlyle Holiday, who was booed by Cornhusker fans when he entered the game.

The sophomore from San Antonio, Texas, chose the Irish over

Nebraska in a spirited recruiting battle that went down to letter-of-intent signing day before being decided.

Holiday directed a 10-play, 64-yard drive to a field goal on his first series. But Davie sent LoVecchio back in for the next series. Neither could move Notre Dame with consistency.

The Irish managed only 168 total yards. "I thought our effort tonight was probably at a higher level than we've played all year," said Cornhusker defensive coordinator Craig Bohl.

Except for the punt block, Nebraska's special teams played at a high level, too.

The record crowd also was a factor, according to Crouch.

"That's probably the loudest I've heard it in this stadium," he said.

The Cornhuskers dedicated the game to Solich, whose father died of congestive heart failure on the Friday before they played Troy State.

"We came out very emotional," Crouch said. "I think it meant a lot for everybody to go out there and give it all they had. This is a family."



The offensive line is a family with-in that family. And Volk was defensive about it. He was asked if he thought the offensive line's effort was better than it had been in the first two games.

"I think the effort was the same. A lot of it was execution," he said. "We've been improving. Everybody was fired up up-front. We were taking a lot of heat, and we're getting tired of it. Everybody wanted to come out and send a message. We wanted to let people know we are a Nebraska line." ■

4TH & 1 NCHES

Notes And Quotes From The Notre Dame Game

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, FRANK

Game day was also Coach Frank Solich's 57th birthday. "I actually haven't given much thought to my birthday," he said afterward. "There were a lot of other things on my mind."

Foremost, of course, was the death of his father the previous Friday. "It's been an emotional week for myself and my family," he said. "I appreciate everybody's thoughtfulness."

NO SURPRISE HERE

Tight end Tracey Wistrom led Nebraska's receivers with four catches for 71 yards. "I give Nebraska credit," said Notre Dame Coach Bob Davie. "I was concerned about their tight end coming into the game. We had a hard time matching up. There were a couple of times we had man-to-man coverage, and we had a safety on him. We couldn't even cover him with a safety, let alone a linebacker."

TOP 10 RUSHER

Eric Crouch's rushing total wasn't impressive. He gained 31 yards on 14 carries. But with those 31 yards, he moved into the top 10 among career rushers at Nebraska.

GIVE, AND TAKE

Notre Dame tied an NCAA record last season by turning over the ball only eight times. The Fighting Irish had four turnovers against Nebraska, two interceptions and two fumbles.

INJURY UPDATE

Nebraska apparently came through the game in good shape. The only significant injury was to starting nose tackle Jason Lohr, who suffered sprained left knee ligaments in the first half. Cornerback Erwin Swiney saw limited action, his first of the season, because of a high ankle sprain.

GOT HIS KICKS

Redshirted freshman Sandro DeAngelis earned the starting place-kickers job during practice leading up to the game and responded with field goals of 19 and 21 yards. He was 3-for-3 on extra-point kicks.

REAL AMERICAN HERO

Norfolk native Lt. Shane Osborn, the pilot of a Navy aircraft that made an emergency landing in China last spring, visited Nebraska's practice on Wednesday and was presented an honorary Blackshirt by defensive coordinator Craig Bohl and defensive tackle and co-captain Jeremy Slechta. Osborn participated in an honorary pre-game coin toss. The members of his squadron also were guests at the game.

STAR WARS

Television host Regis Philbin, a 1953 Notre Dame alumnus, turned down an invitation to be Omaha investor Warren Buffett's guest at the game. Philbin said work was the reason for his declining.

However, Philbin told the Lincoln Journal Star, "I told Warren I'd take a pass on the 'Millionaire' show if he'd give me a couple of stock tips. That ended that conversation right there."

Philbin predicted a Notre Dame victory, 24-21.

Buffett jokingly offered Notre Dame defensive end Grant Irons stock tips in exchange for the Fighting Irish playbook. Irons, a business major, is a fan of Buffett's, leading to the surprise phone call.

REASON, NOT LOYALTY

Former Cornhusker Trev Alberts, a college football analyst for CNN/SI, predicted a Notre Dame victory, 14-10, writing on-line, "This game is about as close to a toss-up as you're going to get. Nebraska is favored because it's playing at home and is higher ranked. I don't see it."

He could have. The game was televised nationally by ABC.

GAMEDAY RECORD

ESPN "GameDay" originated from Memorial Stadium. The early-morning telecast, featuring Chris Fowler, Kirk Herbstreit and Lee Corso, attracted a "GameDay" record 15,808 fans. The previous record of 15,500 was set at Kansas State last season for the Nebraska game. ■

2001 Schedule

(Team's current record)

- 1 Aug. 25 TCU (2-1), W 21-7
- 2 Sept. 1 Troy State (0-2), W 42-14
- 3 Sept. 8 Notre Dame (0-1), W 27-10
- 4 Sept. 15 Rice (2-0), 6 p.m., FSN
- 5 Sept. 29 @ Missouri (1-1), TBA
- 6 Oct. 6 Iowa State (1-0), TBA
- 7 Oct. 13 @ Baylor (1-0), 1 p.m.
- 8 Oct. 20 Texas Tech (1-0),
Homecoming, TBA
- 9 Oct. 27 Oklahoma (3-0), TBA
- 10 Nov. 3 @ Kansas (1-1), TBA
- 11 Nov. 10 Kansas State (1-0), TBA
- 12 Nov. 23 @ Colorado (2-1), 2:30 p.m.,
ABC
- Dec. 1 Big 12 Championship
at Irving, Texas, 7 p.m., ABC

Upcoming Opponents' Schedules

Rice (2-0)
 Sept. 1 at Houston, W 21-14
 Sept. 8 Duke, W 15-13
 Sept. 15 at Nebraska
 Sept. 29 at Hawaii
 Oct. 6 Boise State
 Oct. 13 at Navy
 Oct. 20 Nevada
 Oct. 27 at Louisiana Tech
 Nov. 3 at Fresno State
 Nov. 10 Tulsa
 Nov. 17 Texas-El Paso
 Nov. 24 at Southern Methodist

Missouri (1-1)
 Sept. 1 Bowling Green, L 20-13
 Sept. 8 SW Texas St., W 40-6
 Sept. 15 at Michigan State
 Sept. 29 Nebraska
 Oct. 6 at Oklahoma State
 Oct. 13 Iowa State
 Oct. 20 at Kansas
 Oct. 27 Texas
 Nov. 3 at Colorado
 Nov. 10 Baylor
 Nov. 17 at Kansas State

Big 12 at a Glance

Thursday, Sept. 6
 Texas A&M 28, Wyoming 20
Saturday, Sept. 8
 Nebraska 27, Notre Dame 10
 Kansas State 10, Southern Cal 6
 UCLA 41, Kansas 14
 Colorado 51, San Jose State 15

Missouri 40, Southwest Texas State 6
 Iowa State 45, Northern Iowa 0
 Texas 44, North Carolina 14
 Oklahoma 37, North Texas 10
 Baylor 24, Arkansas State 3
 Texas Tech 42, New Mexico 30
 Oklahoma State 30, Louisiana Tech 23

Game 4

Rice
Sept. 15

Location: Houston, Texas

Enrollment: 4,320

2000 record: 3-8

Coach: Ken Hatfield,
eighth year

Series: First meeting



6 p.m. (Fox Sports Net)
Memorial Stadium, Lincoln

Owl to Watch

Sophomore quarterback Kyle Herm has shown his versatility in Rice's first two games.



In the opener, his first career start, the 5-foot-8, 175-pounder rushed for 119 yards. In Game 2, he passed for 116 yards and scored the game's first

touchdown on a 1-yard run.

Herm is the Texas Class 2A record holder with 81 career touchdown passes at Stanton High School.

Quick Facts

Rice Coach Ken Hatfield is the nation's fifth-winningest active coach with a 149-104-4 record in his 23rd season as a head coach. Hatfield, who is 36-42-1 in his eighth season at Rice, previously coached at Air Force, Arkansas and Clemson.

Rice's 21-14 victory in the season-opener at Houston ended an eight-game road losing streak. The 2-0 Owls are in search of their first 3-0 start in 29 years.

The Owls held off Duke 15-13 when a potential tying two-point conversion failed. The crowd at 70,000-seat Rice Stadium was listed at 17,745, approximately 60,000 less than will be in the stands this week at Nebraska.

On Deck

At Missouri
Sept. 29

Location: Columbia, Mo.

Enrollment: 22,723

2001 record: 1-1

Coach: Gary Pinkel, first year

Series: Nebraska leads 59-32-3



Time TBA

Memorial Stadium, Columbia, Mo.

Tentative 2 Deeps

NEBRASKA OFFENSE

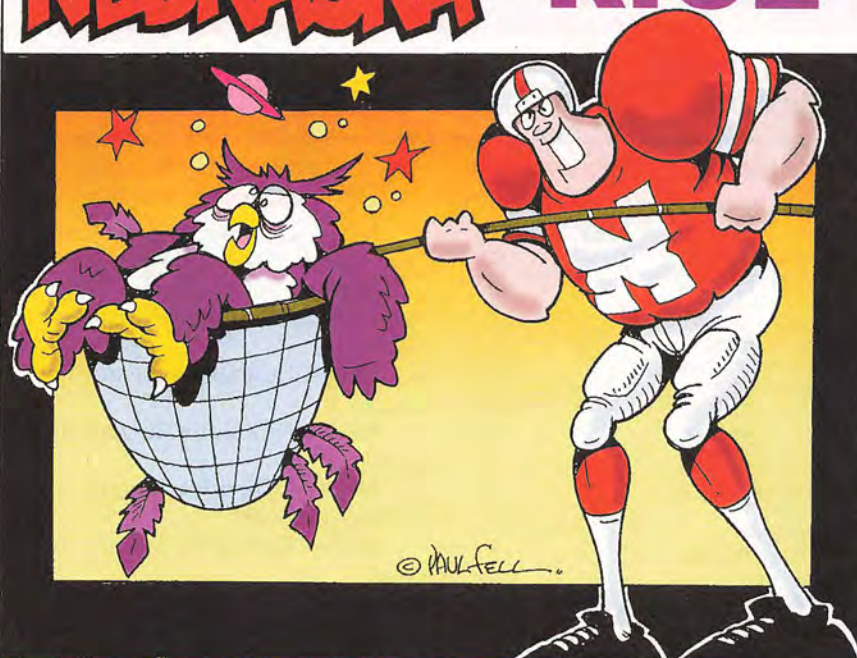
SE	9	Wilson Thomas**	6-6	215	Jr.
	9	Ben Zajack	6-0	210	Fr.
LT	58	Dave Volk***	6-5	300	Sr.
	75	Kyle Kollmorgen***	6-5	310	Sr.
LG	77	Toni Fonoti**	6-4	340	Jr.
	74	Steve Altstadt*	6-5	295	Sr.
C	52	John Garrison**	6-4	285	Jr.
	53	Matt Shook*	6-2	300	Jr.
RG	66	Jon Rutherford***	6-3	300	Sr.
	59	Wes Cody*	6-2	295	Jr.
RT	68	Dan Waldrop*	6-5	330	So.
	66	Jon Rutherford***	6-3	300	Sr.
TE	87	Tracey Wistrom***	6-5	240	Sr.
	99	Aaron Golliday**	6-4	285	Jr.
QB	7	Eric Crouch***	6-1	200	Sr.
	10	Jammal Lord*	6-2	215	So.
FB	4	Judd Davies*	6-0	240	So.
	45	Steve Kriewald	5-10	255	Fr.
IB	30	Dahrran Diedrick**	6-0	225	Jr.
	1	Thunder Collins*	6-2	190	Jr.
WB	8	John Gibson***	6-0	195	Sr.
	89	Troy Hassebrook**	6-4	220	Jr.
PK	22	Sandro DeAngelis	5-8	195	Fr.

NEBRASKA DEFENSE

LR	57	Chris Kelsay**	6-5	270	Jr.
	92	Justin Smith**	6-4	260	Jr.
NT	70	Jason Lohr***	6-2	275	Sr.
	55	Jon Clanton**	6-2	280	Jr.
DT	56	Jeremy Slechta***	6-6	285	Sr.
	85	Casey Nelson**	6-2	285	Sr.
RR	98	Demolne Adams**	6-2	235	Jr.
	95	J.P. Wichmann**	6-4	230	Sr.
SLB	43	Scott Shanle**	6-2	235	Jr.
	47	Ira Cooper	6-2	220	Fr.
MLB	48	Jamie Burrow***	6-1	245	Sr.
	38	Barrett Ruud	6-2	220	Fr.
WLB	9	Mark Vedral**	6-1	210	Sr.
	17	T.J. Hollowell*	6-0	220	So.
LCB	3	Keyuo Craver***	5-10	190	Sr.
	28	Pat Ricketts*	5-11	180	So.
FS	27	Willie Amos*	6-0	185	So.
or	14	Dion Booker***	6-1	205	Sr.
ROV	14	Dion Booker***	6-1	205	Sr.
	21	Philip Bland	6-0	205	Fr.
RCB	5	DeJuan Groce**	5-10	190	Jr.
or	16	Erwin Swiney**	6-0	185	Sr.
P	19	Kyle Larson	6-0	205	So.

THE PAUL FELL PREDICTION

NEBRASKA vs. RICE



SEPT. 15, 2001

RICE DISCOVERS HUSKERS DON'T GIVE A HOOT FOR NOTION OF AN OWL UPSET IN BIG RED COUNTRY!

RICE OFFENSE

SE	81	Gavin Boothe*	6-2	185	So.
	16	Gilbert Okoronkwo***	6-3	204	Sr.
LT	65	Heath Fowler***	6-2	275	Sr.
	66	Paxton Corder*	6-3	281	So.
LG	75	Keith Meyer*	6-3	284	Jr.
	64	Brandon Wallace**	6-1	262	Sr.
C	73	Aaron Sandoval***	6-2	295	Sr.
	52	Ben Stephens*	6-2	290	So.
RG	77	Ryan Smith**	6-2	319	Sr.
	71	Micah Meador	6-3	304	Fr.
RT	74	Billy Harvin***	6-4	275	Sr.
	68	Clint Crisp	6-3	285	Jr.
TE	86	Brandon Manning***	6-4	245	Sr.
	82	Travis Thompson*	6-2	240	Jr.
QB	1	Kyle Herm*	5-8	175	So.
	5	Greg Henderson	5-11	195	Fr.
LHB	26	Leroy Bradley***	5-11	205	Sr.
	21	Derek Gary**	6-0	204	Sr.
FB	37	Jamie Tyler***	5-11	220	Sr.
	41	Robbie Beck*	5-11	212	So.
RHB	25	Sean White**	5-6	180	Jr.
	32	Vincent Hawkins**	5-6	175	Jr.
PK	3	Brandon Skeen*	6-1	185	So.

RICE DEFENSE

DE	87	Brandon Green**	6-3	251	Jr.
	48	Rene Aniniao	6-2	210	Fr.
DT	70	Lance Redman	6-2	279	So.
	78	Ross Lassley*	6-3	258	So.
NG	99	Larry Brown***	6-2	309	Sr.
	91	Jonathan Chism*	6-3	250	So.
DE	56	Clint Johnson***	6-1	250	Sr.
	46	Nick Sabula**	6-2	215	Jr.
SLB	47	Rashard Pittman***	5-11	237	Sr.
	45	Scott Huffman**	5-10	225	Jr.
WLB	43	Joe Bob Thompson***	6-0	224	Sr.
	42	Justin Engler*	6-2	214	Jr.
BAN	30	Dan Dawson**	6-2	200	Sr.
	17	Antwan Shell**	5-11	185	Jr.
LCB	20	Patrick Dendy*	6-0	170	So.
	19	Clifford Sparks	5-9	189	Fr.
SS	40	Greg Gatlin**	6-0	175	Jr.
	31	John White*	5-11	170	So.
FS	13	Jason Hebert***	6-0	192	Sr.
	10	Terry Holley	6-2	190	Fr.
RCB	9	Kenny Smith***	5-7	170	Sr.
	29	Raymorris Barnes	5-9	170	Fr.
P	8	Travis Hale**	6-3	201	Jr.

PICKS

RICE AT NEBRASKA

Brian Hill Editor

The Owls bring a 2-0 record to Lincoln, but don't think the Huskers will give a hoot. There's certainly an opportunity for a letdown after the emotion surrounding the Notre Dame game, but the Husker offense still has a lot to prove, especially the backups, who didn't get to see much action in the Notre Dame game. Look for the offense to pile up its biggest numbers this season.

Nebraska 59, Rice 6

Mike Babcock Contributing Editor

The good news is, Rice has most of its starters returning from a year ago. That's also the

bad news, since the Owls weren't successful last season, and it appears they're headed for more of the same. This should be a tune-up for Big 12 play for the Cornhuskers.

Nebraska 49, Rice 10

Terry Douglass Grand Island (Neb.)

Independent Sports Editor

Nebraska must be careful to avoid a letdown after an emotion-filled victory over Notre Dame. However, that doesn't seem likely. Cornhusker senior quarterback Eric Crouch will keep pushing the Husker offense hard as that unit still has plenty to prove.

Nebraska 48, Rice 10

BY THE NUMBERS

Nebraska vs. Notre Dame

Sept. 8, 2001 • Memorial Stadium • Lincoln, Neb.

Score By Quarters

Notre Dame	0	3	0	7	—	10
Nebraska	17	10	0	0	—	27

Team Stats

	ND	NU
First Downs	14	16
Rushing	4	10
Passing	6	5
Penalty	4	1
Rushing Attempts	30	52
Yards Gained Rushing	108	202
Yards Lost Rushing	108	15
Net Yards Rushing	65	182
Net Yards Passing	119	88
Passes Attempted	32	9
Passes Completed	16	6
Had Intercepted	2	0
Total Plays	62	61
Total Net Yards	162	270
Avg. Gain Per Play	2.6	4.4
Fumbles-Lost	3-2	3-2
Penalties-Yards	9-63	10-69
Punts-Yards	7-320	7-244
Avg. Per Punt	45.7	34.9
Punt Returns-Yards	4-24	6-53
Interceptions-Yards	0-0	2-40
Fumble Returns-Yards	0-0	1-7
Kickoff Returns-Yards	5-104	2-76
Possession Time	29:10	30:50

Scoring

NU — Dahrran Diedrick 2-yard run (Sandro DeAngelis kick)
NU — John Gibson 22-yard pass from Eric Crouch (DeAngelis kick)
NU — DeAngelis 19-yard field goal
ND — Nick Setta 29-yard field goal
NU — Diedrick 3-yard run (DeAngelis kick)
NU — DeAngelis 21-yard field goal
ND — Tony Fisher 1-yard run (Setta kick)
Att. — 78,118 (school record)
Temp. — 66
Weather — Cloudy, rain third quarter.

Individual Leaders

NOTRE DAME

RUSHING

Name	Att.	Yds.	YPC	LNG	TD
Fisher, T.	7	38	5.4	35	1
Holiday, C.	8	21	2.6	17	0
Jones, J.	8	19	2.4	9	0
Howard, T.	4	6	1.5	4	0
LoVecchio, M.	2	4	2.0	2	0
Team	1	-45	-45.0	0	0

PASSING

Name	C-A-I	Pct.	Yds.	TD
LoVecchio, M.	11-24-1	45.8	78	0
Holiday, C.	5-8-1	62.5	41	0

RECEIVING

Name	No.	Yds.	YPC	LNG	TD
Givens, D.	7	66	9.4	19	0
Hunter, J.	4	38	9.5	13	0
Battle, A.	2	8	4.0	5	0
Jones, J.	1	8	8.0	8	0
Lopienski, T.	1	0	0.0	0	0
Fisher, T.	1	-1	-1.0	0	0

PUNTING

Name	No.	Yds.	Avg.	LNG
Hildbold, J.	7	320	45.7	54

PUNT RETURNS

Name	No.	Yds.	YPR	LNG	TD
Jones, J.	3	14	4.7	6	0
Walton, S.	1	10	10.0	10	0

KICKOFF RETURNS

Name	No.	Yds.	YPR	LNG	TD
Jones, J.	2	52	26.0	30	0
Howard, T.	1	27	27.0	27	0
Givens, D.	1	16	16.0	16	0
Murray, J.	1	9	9.0	9	0

DEFENSE

Name	UT	AT	TT	FL	Int.	Sacks
Watson, C.	7	11	18	1-1	0	0
Dykes, D.	4	6	13	0	0	0
Harrison, T.	4	7	11	0	0	0
Israel, R.	5	4	9	0	0	0
Weaver, A.	5	3	8	3-16	0	1-9
Jefferson, C.	2	5	7	2-7	0	0
Boiman, R.	0	5	5	0	0	0
Wisne, A.	1	2	3	0	0	0
Walton, S.	2	0	2	1-1	0	0
Hilliard, C.	1	1	2	0	0	0
Duff, V.	1	1	2	0	0	0
Curtin, B.	1	0	1	0	0	0
Givens, D.	1	0	1	0	0	0
Beckstrom, J.	1	0	1	0	0	0
Irons, G.	0	1	1	0	0	0

NEBRASKA

RUSHING

Name	Att.	Yds.	YPC	LNG	TD
Diedrick, D.	32	133	4.2	13	2
Crouch, E.	14	31	2.2	7	0
Davies, J.	5	21	4.2	11	0
Brye, C.	1	-3	-3.0	0	0

PASSING

Name	C-A-I	Pct.	Yds.	TD
Crouch, E.	6-9-0	66.7	88	1

RECEIVING

Name	No.	Yds.	YPC	LNG	TD
Wistrom, T.	4	71	17.8	23	0
Gibson, J.	1	22	22.0	22	1
Diedrick, D.	1	-5	-5.0	0	0

PUNTING

Name	No.	Yds.	Avg.	LNG
Larson, K.	6	244	40.7	54
Team	1	0	0.0	0

PUNT RETURNS

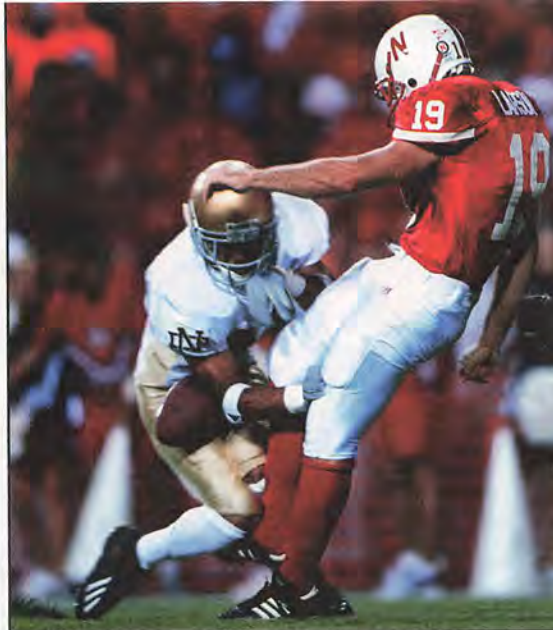
Name	No.	Yds.	YPR	LNG	TD
Craver, K.	2	29	14.5	19	0
Groce, D.	4	24	6.0	10	0

KICKOFF RETURNS

Name	No.	Yds.	YPR	LNG	TD
Davis, J.	2	76	38.0	43	0

DEFENSE

Name	UT	AT	TT	FL	Int.	Sacks
Burrow, J.	4	7	11	2-2	0	0
Groce, D.	7	0	7	0	1-40	0
Craver, K.	3	2	5	0	0	0
Shanley, S.	2	3	5	1-4	0	1-4
Clanton, J.	2	2	4	0	0	0
Vedral, M.	2	2	4	1-6	0	0
Bland, P.	0	4	4	0	0	0
Ricketts, P.	2	1	3	0	0	0
McPherson, L.	2	1	3	1-1	0	0
Booker, D.	2	1	3	0	0	0
Kelsay, C.	1	2	3	0	0	0
Adams, D.	2	0	2	1-4	0	1-4
Ruud, B.	0	2	2	0	0	0
Slechta, J.	0	2	2	0	0	0
Demerath, T.	0	2	2	0	0	0
Hassebroek, T.	1	0	1	0	0	0
Bingham, R.	1	0	1	1-1	0	0
Wichmann, J.P.	1	0	1	0	0	0
Amos, W.	0	1	1	0	1-0	0
Hopkins, L.	0	1	1	0	0	0
Richenberger, J.	0	1	1	0	0	0
Smith, J.	0	1	1	0	0	0



Notre Dame's Shane Walton blocks a punt by Kyle Larson on the final play of the third quarter.

2001 SEASON STATS

RUSHING

Name	G	Att.	Yds.	YPG	TD
Diedrick, D.	2	57	310	155.0	5
Crouch, E.	3	53	148	49.3	2
Collins, T.	3	25	123	41.0	3
Davies, J.	3	9	32	10.7	0
Kriewald, S.	3	5	24	8.0	0
Grixby, D.	1	8	15	15.0	0
Brye, C.	3	2	14	4.7	0
Lord, J.	1	3	5	5.0	0

PASSING

Name	G	C-A-I	Pct.	Yds.	TD
Crouch, E.	3	42-42-2	57.1	348	1
Lord, J.	1	1-1-0	100.0	18	0

RECEIVING

Name	G	No.	Yds.	YPC	YPG	TD
Wistrom, T.	3	10	145	14.5	48.3	0
Thomas, W.	3	8	136	17.0	45.3	0
Gibson, J.	3	4	74	18.5	24.7	1
Collins, T.	3	1	12	12.0	4.0	0
Golliday, A.	3	1	4	4.0	1.3	0
Diedrick, D.	2	1	-5	-5.0	0	0

FIELD GOALS

Name	G	Att.	Good	Long
DeAngelis, S.	3	2	2	21
Brown, J.	1	1	0	0

PUNTING

Name	No.	Yds.	Avg.	LNG
Larson, K.	16	732	45.8	56

DEFENSE

Name	G	UT	AT	TT	FL	Int.	S/Yds.
Burrow, J.	3	7	15	22	5-10	0	5-5
Ruud, B.	3	5	12	17	0	0	0
Craver, K.	3	8	5	13	0	0	0
Shanley, S.	3	4	8	12	2-8	0	1-4
Kelsay, C.	3	5	7	12	5-9	0	1-5
Vedral, M.	3	4	8	12	2-7	1-0	0
Groce, D.	3	10	2	12	0	1-40	0
Bland, P.	3	3	8	11	1-2	0	0
McPherson, L.	3	7	2	9	2-9	0	1-8
Adams, D.	3	3	6	9	2-15	0	2-15
Ricketts, P.	3	6	2	8	0	0	0
Hollowell, T.J.	2	3	5	8	1-1	0	0
Booker, D.	3	5	3	8	0	0	0
Amos, W.	3	2	5	7	1-1	2-0	0
Slechta, J.	3	0	7	7	0	2-2	0
Smith, J.	3	2	4	6	3-17	0	2-15
Clanton, J.	3	3	3	6	1-15	0	1-15
Nelson, C.	3	2	3	5	2-4	0	0
Lohr, J.	3	3	1	4	3-16	0	2.5-16

TEAM STATISTICS

Total Offensive Yards	1,037	513				
Plays	205	183				
Average Per Play	5.1	2.8				
Average Per Game	345.7	171.0				
Net Rushing Yards	671	74				
Attempts	162	93				
TDs Rushing	10	2				
Net Passing Yards	366	439				
Completions	25	42				
Average Per Pass	8.5	4.9				
Average Per Catch	14.6	10.5				
Average Per Game	122.0	146.3				
TDs Passing	1	2				
Sacks By-Yards	12-95	8-61				
Fumbles-Lost	8-5	8-4				
Penalties-Yards	19-175	28-201				
Scoring	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	OT	TOT
NU	44	24	15	7	0	90
Opponents	14	10	0	7	0	31

Ex-Huskers in the NFL



Mike Brown



Chris Dishman



Ahman Green

Player	Pos.	Team	Yr.	No.
Dan Alexander	RB	Tennessee Titans	R	36
Michael Booker	DB	Tennessee Titans	5	33
Kris Brown	PK	Pittsburgh Steelers	3	3
Mike Brown	S	Chicago Bears	2	30
Ralph Brown	DB	New York Giants	2	22
Correll Buckhalter	RB	Philadelphia Eagles	R	28
Chris Dishman	OG	Arizona Cardinals	5	67
Jay Foreman	LB	Buffalo Bills	3	55
Scott Frost	S	Cleveland Browns	4	47
Ahman Green	RB	Green Bay Packers	4	30
Russ Hochstein	OG	Tampa Bay Buccaneers	R	65
Sheldon Jackson	TE	Buffalo Bills	3	88
Eric Johnson	DB	Oakland Raiders	2	41
Joel Makovicka	FB	Arizona Cardinals	3	34
Mike Minter	S	Carolina Panthers	5	30
John Parrella	DE	San Diego Chargers	9	97
Christian Peter	DT	Indianapolis Colts	5	97
Jason Peter	DE	Carolina Panthers	4	97
Carlos Polk	LB	San Diego Chargers	R	52
Dominic Raiola	C	Detroit Lions	R	51
Mike Rucker	DE	Carolina Panthers	3	93
Cory Schlesinger	FB	Detroit Lions	7	30
Will Shields	OG	Kansas City Chiefs	9	68
Brenden Stai	OG	Detroit Lions	7	66
Adam Treu	C	Oakland Raiders	5	62
Kyle Vanden Bosch	DE	Arizona Cardinals	R	93
Joe Walker	DB	Tennessee Titans	R	29
Eric Warfield	DB	Kansas City Chiefs	4	44
Steve Warren	DT	Green Bay Packers	2	96
Zach Wiegert	OG	Jacksonville Jaguars	7	77
Tyrone Williams	DB	Green Bay Packers	6	37
Grant Wistrom	DE	St. Louis Rams	4	98



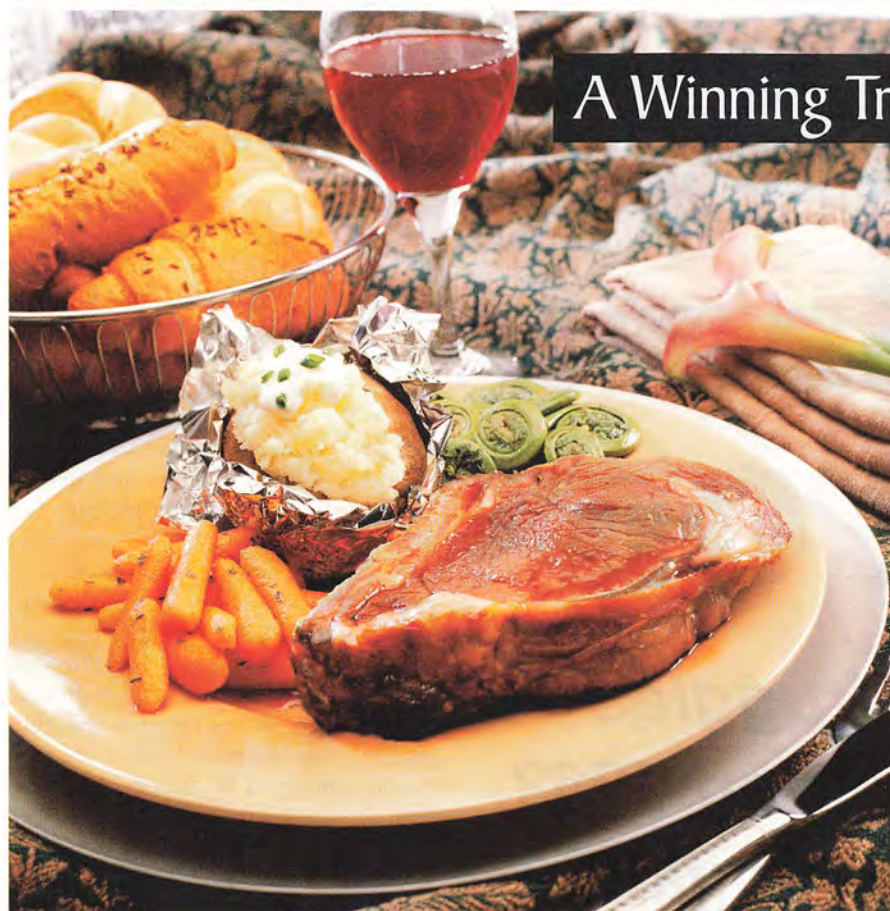
Mike Minter



John Parrella



Grant Wistrom



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Oklahoma Coach Bud Wilkinson (left) and Nebraska's Bob Devaney were in favor of playing the game as scheduled Nov. 23, 1963.

Despite Tragedy, the Game Went On

Officials struggled with decision on 1963 Husker-Sooners game

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Nebraska continues to enjoy amazing success in the friendly confines of Memorial Stadium. Entering the 2001 season, the Huskers are 81-3 at home the last 13 years and carry a streak of 239 consecutive sellouts. Since it opened in 1923, Memorial Stadium has been the site of many great games. In each issue during the 2001 season, Huskers Illustrated will feature one of those games.

By Mike Babcock

The University of Nebraska Board of Regents met for two hours on Friday night before finally deciding to go ahead and play the game the next day.

Earlier, Clifford Hardin, the university chancellor, had consulted with his vice chancellors and determined that the game should be played. But no sooner had he made the announcement than Nebraska Gov. Frank Morrison asked that he reconsider.

Morrison wanted the contest postponed. That was the appropriate thing to do in his opinion. So the regents, who were in Lincoln for the game, convened to discuss the matter.

At the same time, Wayne Duke, executive director of the Big Eight Conference, polled conference facul-

ty representatives by phone to determine their attitude toward playing.

The date was Nov. 22, 1963.

President John F. Kennedy had been assassinated while riding in a motorcade in Dallas, Texas, that day. Lee Harvey Oswald was the assassin, firing the fatal shots from a window in a schoolbook warehouse. Whether or not Oswald acted alone would become the subject of considerable debate.

The debate in Lincoln, as in other communities across the country where athletic events had been scheduled, however, was whether to play or not to play — out of respect for the slain president.

The National Football League decided to go ahead with its games that weekend, but not to televise any, while the fledgling American Football League opted to postpone all of its games.

The National and American Hockey Leagues as well as the National Basketball Association postponed games scheduled for that Friday night but resumed playing on Saturday.

NCAA executive secretary Walter Byers left the decision on whether to postpone football games to school officials. The Harvard-Yale game at New Haven, Conn., was immediately postponed. Illinois and Michigan State went the other way, announcing that they would go ahead and play as scheduled in East Lansing. Their game would determine the Big Ten representative in the Rose Bowl game.

The winner of the Nebraska-Oklahoma game would represent the Big Eight in the Orange Bowl, and that was among the factors the Board of Regents considered in proceeding as scheduled. Oklahoma still had to play Oklahoma State the next week, so it wasn't simply a matter of waiting a week.

Besides, bowl officials and television networks were eager to begin promoting their games. If Nebraska and Oklahoma didn't play that Saturday, they would probably have to wait until the first Saturday in December — when Nebraska's unpredictable weather could be a big factor.

The regents also took into consideration the fact that hundreds of fans

from Oklahoma, as well as Nebraska fans from outside the area and the state, were already in Lincoln.

Cornhusker Coach Bob Devaney was in favor of playing, as was Oklahoma Coach Bud Wilkinson, who had served as the chairman of Kennedy's Council on Physical Fitness.

Big Eight faculty reps also were in favor of playing, although other games involving conference teams were postponed. But the final decision belonged to the Board of Regents.

The board issued a statement saying that it was "deeply sorrowful about the death of President Kennedy," but, it added, it believed that the people of Nebraska "wish" to have the game played. There could be no doubt about the board's stance. "This will be done," its statement read.

Anticipation for the game had been building since before the season began.

Bob Brown, Nebraska's All-American offensive lineman and linebacker, had told the Big Eight Skywriters that the game, metaphor-

ically speaking, was "liable to be some prayer meeting."

After a victory against then No. 1-ranked USC in late September, Oklahoma tackle Ralph Neely was quoted as saying the Sooners' only tough game remaining would be against Texas.

Neely was right about Texas. The top-ranked Longhorns handed Oklahoma its only loss, 28-7. But Nebraska wasn't about to forget Neely's disrespect, whether intended or not.

Neely "made a hasty generalization," Cornhusker halfback Willie Ross said the week before the game. "When he comes to Nebraska, there'll be a lot of guys thinking about that."

Nebraska also went into the game with one non-conference loss. Air Force had come to Lincoln and won 17-13. But the Cornhuskers had regrouped to win five in a row, and move into the Associated Press rankings, at No. 10. It was the first time a Devaney team had been there.

The Cornhuskers led the nation in rushing, averaging 270.2 yards per game on the ground. Oklahoma was

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No. 2, at 253.9 yards per game. The Cornhuskers were fourth in the nation in total offense, and they were on the verge of breaking the school single-season record for rushing defense.

They had been successful even though senior quarterback Dennis Claridge had been hampered by a charley horse. "If anyone had told me that we would have an 8-1 record at this point with Claridge missing three games and other players hurt at key times, I would have suggested that he try some other kind of dope," Devaney said at the Extra Point Club luncheon on the Monday before the game.

Nebraska, which was looking to win its first conference title since 1940, had been better statistically, but Oklahoma had the higher ranking. The Sooners were No. 6 in the AP poll, dropping one place despite winning at Missouri the previous week — their 16th consecutive conference victory.

Reserve seat tickets had been sold out for months, and 1,500 general admission tickets had been sold within 20 minutes after they were put on sale the week before. The game was telecast live in Lincoln and Grand Island by KOLN-TV and by closed circuit in Omaha and Oklahoma City.

Memorial Stadium's press box, "rated among the worst in the conference, may need reinforcement as it bulges with writers and broadcasters Saturday," the Lincoln Star reported.

In addition to a host of writers, including eight representing the Associated Press, six radio stations were originating broadcasts.

Because of what was at stake, Devaney indicated on Monday that he would close his practices to reporters and spectators, but that turned out to be an idle threat. They remained open.

The consensus was, Oklahoma would win, overcoming Nebraska's size with quickness in the line and superior speed in the backfield. Steve Snider of United Press International predicted a 21-14 Oklahoma victory, noting, however, that the Sooners "must stall Husker rushing."

Oklahoma did limit the Cornhuskers to 194 yards rushing, but the Sooners managed only 98 yards on the ground and lost five of seven fumbles. Nebraska's Brown, John Kirby, Lloyd Voss, Larry Kramer, Monte Kiffin, Bob Jones and Walt Barnes, among others, dominated the line of scrimmage.

With 14:29 remaining in the game, the Cornhuskers scored to take a 17-0 lead.

Oklahoma finally got on the scoreboard to cut the lead to 17-7, but interceptions by Dave Theisen and Kent McCloughan set up touchdowns that made the score 29-7 with 5:43 remaining.

A pair of lost fumbles enabled the Sooners to score twice in just over a minute and cut the lead to 29-20, but the second touchdown came with 42 seconds remaining, and immediately after that, many in the crowd of 38,485 stormed the field to pull down the steel goal posts in celebration.

A banner that read "All the Way to Miami" hung from the roof of the north fieldhouse as the Cornhuskers ran onto the field before the game. But it came down in the wind soon after.

The flags flapping in that wind were at half-mast, an inescapable reminder of the tragedy that could have caused Nebraska's celebration to be postponed. ■



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Aug. 31	Arizona	7 p.m.
Sept. 2	Alabama-Birmingham	1 p.m.
Sept. 5	Minnesota	7 p.m.
Sept. 21	Northern Iowa	7 p.m.
Sept. 23	Evansville	1 p.m.
Sept. 28	Baylor	7 p.m.
Oct. 5	Missouri	7 p.m.
Oct. 7	Kansas	1 p.m.
Oct. 17	Brigham Young	7 p.m.
Oct. 28	Texas Tech	1 p.m.
Nov. 2	Iowa State	7 p.m.



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Nebraska Volleyball 2001 Home Schedule

Sept. 7	Pepperdine	7 p.m.
Sept. 8	Notre Dame	1 p.m.
Sept. 9	UCLA	3:30 p.m.
Sept. 15	Texas Tech	7 p.m.
Sept. 25	Creighton	7 p.m.
Sept. 26	Iowa State	7 p.m.
Oct. 3	Missouri	7 p.m.
Oct. 6	Oklahoma (Devaney)	TBA
Oct. 17	Brigham Young	7 p.m.
Oct. 10	Kansas	7 p.m.
Oct. 17	Texas	7 p.m.
Oct. 27	Kansas State	TBA
Nov. 7	Texas A&M	7 p.m.
Nov. 17	Baylor	7 p.m.
Nov. 21	Colorado	7 p.m.



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All Nebraska volleyball home games at NU Coliseum unless noted. All times are central and subject to change.

Happy to be at NU

Husker senior Kropp doesn't mind sharing the spotlight with teammates

By Todd Henrichs

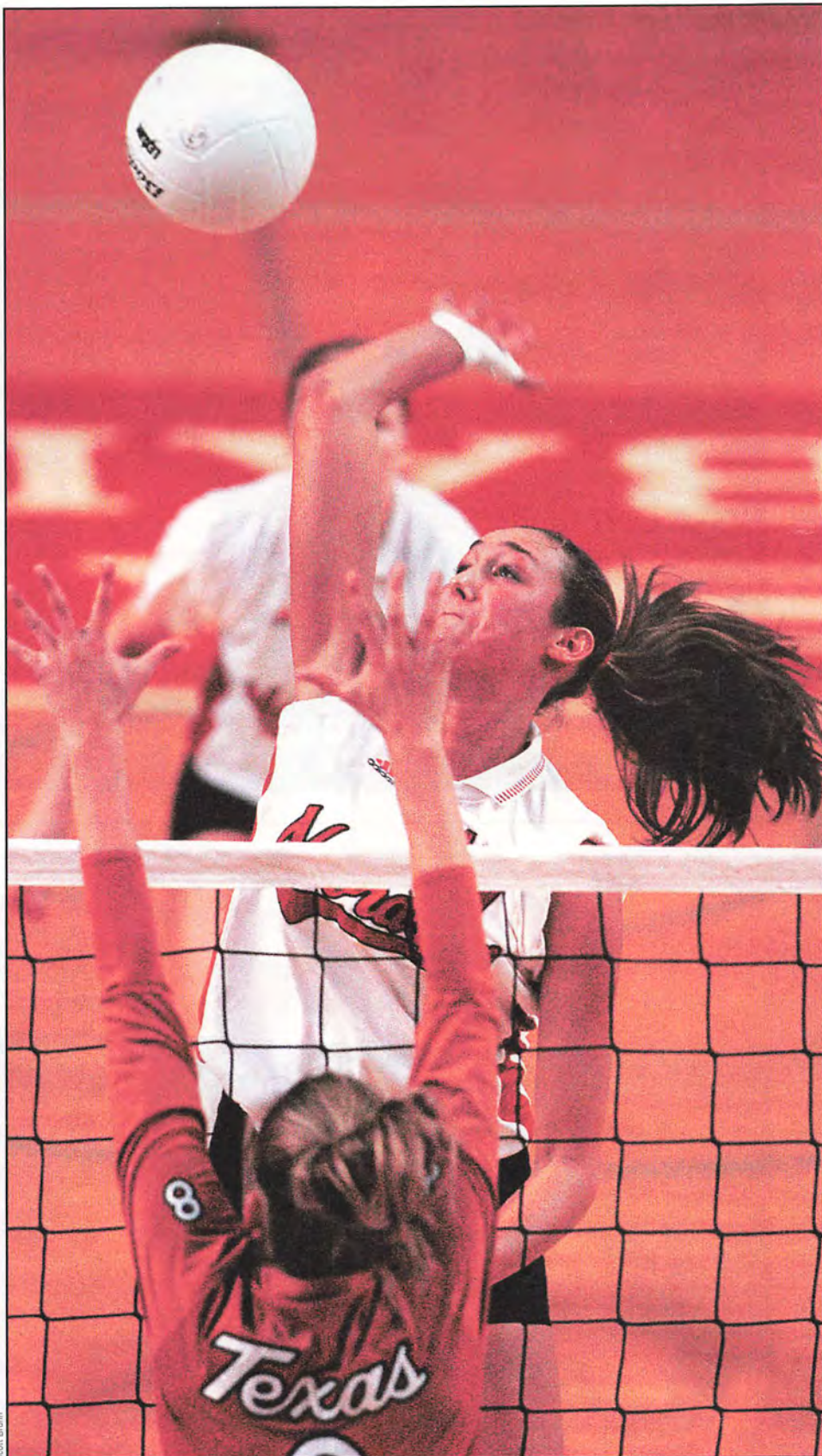
Almost anywhere else, Jenny Kropp would be the center of attention. At any place but Nebraska, she might already be an All-American. Ask just about anybody associated with college women's volleyball, and they'll tell you she's easily one of the most effective middle blockers in the nation.

Her numbers — sixth nationally in blocking last season — back it up.

But playing at Nebraska, Kropp is caught up in a number's game. She shares the court with four teammates of All-America acclaim, and often there aren't enough awards to go around.

That's fine with Kropp, a native Nebraskan from Grand Island Central Catholic who wouldn't trade a thing to be the star of the team.

"Those teams that I would have played on would never be national championship teams," Kropp said. "So it's not worth it to me.



Middle blocker Jenny Kropp was one of Nebraska's four first-team All-Big 12 selections last season.

"I've had a great three years. I've accomplished a lot. I've played on great teams with great teammates. These girls are my friends, and that's

what I'm going to take with me."

While Kropp may not be the most recognized Husker nationwide, she's seen as the emotional leader by her

Nebraska teammates.

Easy-going off the court, Kropp is fiercely competitive on it. She has the knack for coming up big against the most dangerous opponents. Kropp averaged a team-best 1.84 blocks a game against ranked teams last season.

In the NCAA semifinals, she almost single-handedly took care of Hawaii with 16 kills and 10 blocks.

After again ripping apart Hawaii to begin this season, Coach Dave Shoji of the Rainbow Wahine singled out Kropp as the one Husker his players should aspire to be.

"She was relentless," Shoji said. Yet predictably, Kropp was left off the all-tournament team.

Nebraska Coach John Cook can only shake his head. A deserving first-team All-Big 12 selection last year, Kropp is one of the few middle blockers who can play back-row and not give up a thing.

She began this season ranked ninth all-time in block assists and total blocks at Nebraska.

"I said several times last year that I thought Kropp was the key in big matches because of her emotional fire

and competitiveness," Cook said. "Stat-wise maybe she doesn't stand out, but I think emotionally she is a big key."

Cook also believes Kropp is in store for a big senior season, thanks in great part to all the talent she has around her.

With Nancy Metcalf coming off a redshirt season, Kropp will share the front-row with a dangerous attacker and big blocker for two rotations. At certain times, Laura Pilakowski will be alongside.

All standing 6-foot with tremendous athletic ability, opponents will have their hands full trying to stop any of the three.

"I just know as a blocker, when you have three hitters up and a really good left-side and right-side, a lot of times you're worried about closing," Kropp said. "I'm sure that will give the middles a lot more swings with one blocker than two."

"Or maybe they'll just forget about me."

Mature words from Nebraska's captain, who Cook says has made a big jump mentally heading into her final season. "She has more confi-

dence than I've ever seen her have," he said. "She knows she's a veteran, and she knows what it takes."

Nebraska remains a leading championship contender, even if an early season loss at Long Beach State cost the Huskers their long winning streak.

While Penn State's record of 44 straight wins is safe, Nebraska can still etch its name on a short list of repeat national champions. For motivation, Cook stresses the importance of each player's place in history.

"We don't get consumed with it, but we know in the back of our heads that this team is very talented in every position," Kropp said. "We could be one of the best teams in history. That's our goal."

That's what drives Kropp more than any individual honor.

"If you love volleyball and you have a passion to play, you always want to get better," Kropp said. "You always know there's a team or another player out there that is trying just as hard as you are."

"It's not like we've been given anything yet. We still have to work for it." ■

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NU is Still Strong in Mountain West

Husker program continues to attract top prospects in Utah, Arizona

By Doug Horwich

Although the Mountain West Region of the country has traditionally been a stronghold of the Pac-10 and WAC conferences, Nebraska assistant Ron Brown has built a strong recruiting presence in the region that has consistently paid dividends.

Coach Brown is a tireless worker whose ability to build solid personal relationships with recruits and attention to detail have made him one of the top recruiters in the country. This dedication even resulted in a trip to the hospital last year to visit with an Arizona prospect, his girlfriend and the couple's newborn baby.

It's easy to see why many Husker recruits are quick to credit Coach Brown as their primary reason for choosing Nebraska.



Quinton McCoy of Valley Christian High School in Chandler, Ariz., was an All-State selection on both offense and defense.

Nebraska went into Utah in 1999 and 2000 and signed the top defensive player in the state both years. Now, 2002 may feature Utah's best crop of defensive linemen in many years, and the Huskers are on the short list of the top two defensive linemen in the state.

Etuini Haloti Ngata (6-foot-4, 305 pounds, 5.0 40-yard dash) from Highland High School in Salt Lake City, Utah, currently has Nebraska in a slight lead for his services.

"Big Bear," as he is referred to by his teammates, is the No. 2-ranked defensive tackle in the nation by Rivals100.com, and every college recruiter in the country is trying to get a visit from this gentle giant.

Nebraska was his first official visit, which he took during the weekend of the Notre Dame game. Ngata has offers from more than 30 schools and receives an average of 10 handwritten letters from college coaches every day.

"I would say that Nebraska,

Washington, and Oregon have been sending me the most mail," he said. "I will definitely visit Nebraska, UCLA, and Washington. I'm not sure about the other two visits yet. I'm considering USC, Oregon, Oregon State, Texas A&M and Michigan for my last two visits."

Ngata attended Nebraska's football camp in June and put on an impressive display of strength and athleticism that left quite an impression on the Husker staff. The camp performance, combined with his domination on the football field, have made him one of Nebraska's top priorities for the 2002 recruiting season.

One factor in the Huskers' favor is that Ngata is a cousin of Nebraska freshman defensive tackle Manaia Brown, and the two spent time together while Ngata was in Lincoln for football camp. Ngata is also close with Manaia's younger brother, Pani, who aspires to join the Husker program after a two-year stint at Snow Junior College.

Close behind Ngata in terms of national recognition is Jake Kuresa (6-4, 310, 4.9) from Mountain Crest High School in Hyrum, Utah.

Kuresa is so athletic that he played fullback last year for Mountain Crest.

"I played fullback last year on offense," Kuresa said, "and I led our team in receptions. This year, my coach says that he wants to play me at tight end because of my good hands."

However, Kuresa will play exclusively at defensive tackle in college, and the Huskers are high on his list of favorites.

"Their coaches are really nice (at Nebraska)," Kuresa said. "Coach Brown came to my school and talked to me a couple of times on the phone.

Nebraska Commitments for 2002

Player	Hometown (school)	Ht.	Wt.	Pos.
Curt Dukes	Newton (Newton-Conover), N.C.	6-2	210	QB
Matt Herian	Pierce, Neb.	6-5	225	TE
Mark LeFlore	Omaha (Central), Neb.	6-0	185	WR
Kurt Mann	Grand Island, Neb.	6-4 1/2	255	OL
Jay Moore	Elkhorn, Neb.	6-4 1/2	245	RE

He is a really class act. The Nebraska program speaks for itself."

In 2000, Kuresa recorded 88 total tackles, seven sacks and one interception return for a touchdown. He also earned first-team All-State recognition for the second year in a row as a defensive lineman.

Despite his interest in the Huskers, Kuresa lists Southern Cal as his early favorite and said he has been a fan of the Trojans all his life.

"My top five would be USC, BYU, Washington, Nebraska, and Michigan," Kuresa said. "My plan is to visit all of them, either during the season or after. I'm leaning a little to USC right now, but I'm keeping an open mind. The other schools could change my mind."

Despite the fact that his father would like to see him attend USC, his parents have made it clear that the decision is his alone.

"They will back me regardless of where I choose to go," Kuresa said. "My dad likes USC because he grew up in Los Angeles and has family down there. My mom likes BYU because it is close to home, but both make it clear that it will be my decision."

Like Utah, Arizona has been a very lucrative recruiting state for the Husker program over the past decade.

The top prospect in the state this year might be cornerback/athlete Quinton McCoy (5-11, 175, 4.31) from Valley Christian High School in Chandler, Ariz. McCoy never leaves the field, starring as both a running back and cornerback for Valley Christian.

As a junior, he rushed for just more than 1,000 yards and recorded 16 touchdowns. He also passed for 139 yards and one touchdown and had 360 yards in receptions.

"In the middle of the game, my coach usually spreads me out at wide receiver," McCoy said. "I usually get triple-teamed out there, which ends up opening things up in the middle."

McCoy also had three kickoff returns for touchdowns.

On defense, he had 44 tackles and three interceptions last year from his cornerback position. He was named All-State (Class 2A) as both a running back and defensive back.

"I like to play both sides of the ball, but I probably like offense a little bit more," McCoy said. "I like to get the

Top Prospects Like Nebraska

By Rick Shaw

Nebbraska has already managed to secure commitments from five highly touted football prospects for its 2002 recruiting class. However, there is a long way to go until signing day, and the Cornhuskers hope to add an additional 15 to 17 commitments over the next several months.

Here is a list of five prospects that the Huskers would love to lure to Lincoln. All five prospects are considered among the top players in the country, and each lists Nebraska on their early lists of favorites:

1. David Horne, running back (Central High School, Omaha, Nebraska): The 6-foot-0, 200 pound speedster out of Omaha is considered the top prospect in Nebraska and one of the top 10 prep running back prospects in the country for 2001. Horne opened the 2001 campaign with 189 yards rushing in a loss to cross-town rival Creighton Prep.

Horne has narrowed his college choices to six schools. "I've narrowed it down to Nebraska, Michigan, Iowa, Colorado, Wisconsin and Notre Dame," Horne said. "I'm taking an unofficial visit to Nebraska to see them play Notre Dame and have an official visits set up to Colorado the day after Thanksgiving. I'll probably take three or four visits during the season. I hope to have my college decision made by no later than early December."

2. Gerald Riggs, running back (Red Bank High School, Chattanooga, Tenn.): This 6-0, 220-pound man-child out of Tennessee is regarded as one of the top two running back prospects in the country for 2001. As a junior in 2000, Riggs rushed for more than 2,500 yards and scored 39 touchdowns.

Riggs lists four schools in the running for his signature on a letter of intent in February. "I'm looking at Tennessee, LSU, Nebraska, and Michigan," Riggs said. "I don't have a leader between those four. I plan on seeing all of my favorites before making a final decision."

3. Haloti Ngata, defensive tackle (Highland High School, Salt Lake City, Utah): This 6-4, 305-pound standout from Utah is an unblockable force from his defensive tackle post. Ngata logged 26 sacks as a junior in 2000. The massive defensive line prospect is very agile for his size and has recorded a personal best of 4.78 seconds in the 40-yard dash.

Ngata lists three early favorites. "My top three would probably be Nebraska, UCLA, and Washington," Ngata said. "I'm taking my first official visit to Nebraska to watch them play Notre Dame. I don't think I will make a decision until I take all five of my allotted visits."

4. Mike De'Andrea, linebacker (Avon Lake High School, Avon Lake, Ohio): The 6-3, 239-pound De'Andrea may not only be the top linebacker in the country but is possibly the nation's finest prep athlete. De'Andrea bench presses 355 pounds, squats 700 pounds, runs the 40-yard dash in 4.4 seconds and has recorded a 37-inch vertical leap. He also won a gold medal as a junior in the shot put at the AAU National Track Meet.

De'Andrea has had the same four schools deadlocked at the top of his list since early spring. "I like Notre Dame, Nebraska, Ohio State, and Michigan," he said. "All for of those schools are real close. I'll get a better feel for things when I take my official visits." De'Andrea scheduled an unofficial visit to Nebraska for Sept. 8 to watch the Huskers take on Notre Dame.

5. Nathan Rhodes, offensive tackle (East High, Bakersfield, Calif.): The 6-7, 320-pound Rhodes is widely regarded as the top offensive tackle prospect in the country for 2001. By the end of the summer, Rhodes had garnered over 40 scholarship offers from schools across the country.

Rhodes has narrowed his list of destinations to four. "I will visit Michigan, UCLA, Tennessee, and Nebraska for sure," he said. "Those schools are all even right now." Rhodes' only scheduled visit thus far is to Michigan on Nov. 30. ■

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ball. I read holes very well and have very quick feet. I can cut on a dime while maintaining the same speed."

Not surprisingly, McCoy is a hot commodity among college recruiters. "I have over 20 offers right now," he said. "Michigan, Nebraska, Georgia Tech, Washington, Washington State, Oregon, Arizona State, Arkansas, Northwestern, Michigan State, Arizona, California and others have offered. I would say that Nebraska and Michigan are probably recruiting me the hardest."


Because of McCoy's versatility, he is being recruited as an athlete by most programs, including Nebraska.

"Most schools are recruiting me as an athlete," McCoy said. "Most want me as either a receiver or defensive back. Nebraska likes me at running back in addition to defensive back."


McCoy also stars on his track team. As a junior, he won state championships in three events at the state track meet.

McCoy took first in the 100-meter dash with a 10.5 second electronic time. He also won the 200 meters with a time of 21.5 seconds and took the gold in the long jump with a leap of 23-feet-4.

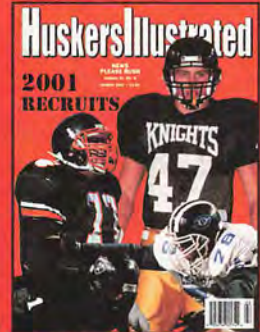
McCoy said that he would like to compete in track in college. ■




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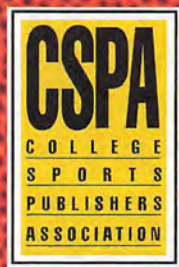
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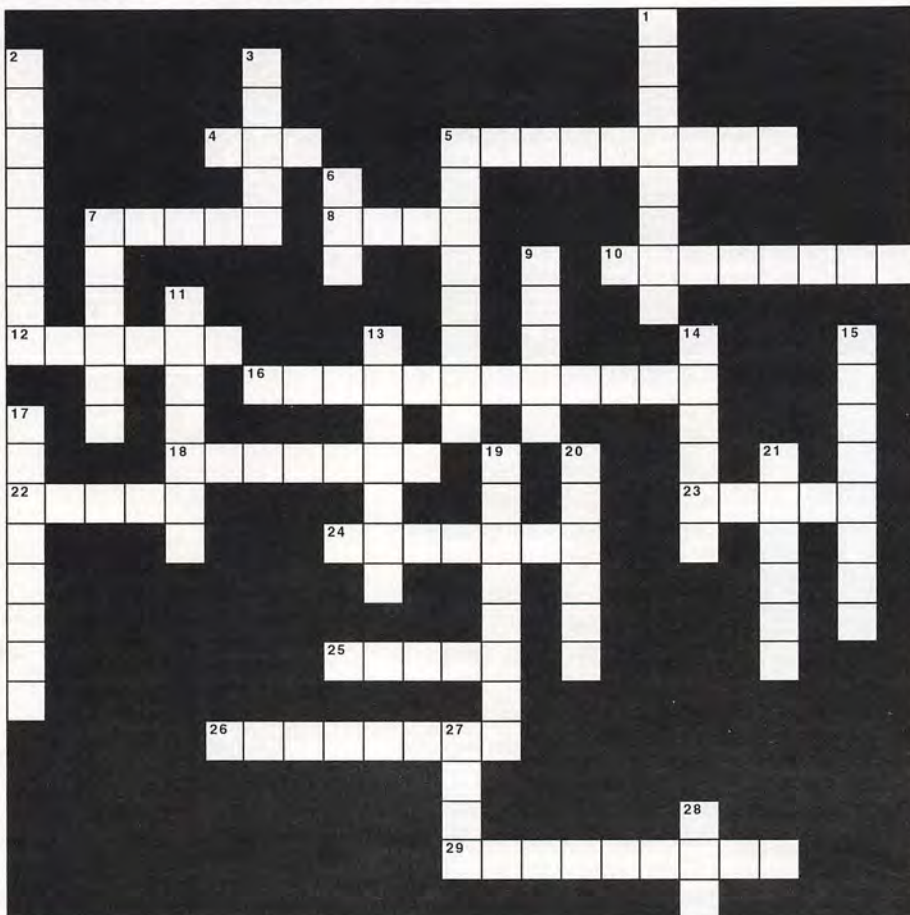
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*Solich meets obligations
while dealing with personal grief*



**Mike
BABCOCK**

IN THE FINAL DAYS OF HIS LIFE, Frank Solich Sr. would send his son from the room at Lincoln's Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital. He was too weak to speak, but he could motion with his hands.

Apparently, there could be no mistaking his meaning. "He did not like me to be away from my players and my job," his son said. "That's just kind of how he always was."

Frank Solich Jr. shared that insight into the character of his father during the Nebraska football team's weekly news conference on the Tuesday prior to the Notre Dame game.

For the most part, he kept his emotions just beneath the surface. You would expect such stoicism of Nebraska's fourth-year head coach. It's a character trait he inherited from his father.

Frank Sr. worked in the Pennsylvania coal mines until he contracted black lung disease. Then the family moved, eventually to Cleveland, where Frank Jr. went to high school.

Frank Sr. took justifiable pride in his son's athletic accomplishments, as a player and for the last 30 or so years as a coach. That's why, in those final days, he would send his son away.

The day before the Cornhuskers played Troy State, Frank Sr. died of congestive heart failure at age 81. Only a few players knew before the game, among them quarterback Eric Crouch.

"We decided not to mention it to the team until afterward," Crouch said.

When it was over and Nebraska had won, 42-14, Crouch presented Solich with a game ball and dedicated the next week's practices and the Notre Dame game to Solich and his father. Also, "we said a prayer for Coach afterward and said a prayer for the family," said Crouch.

"That's pretty much all that happened."

At such times of personal loss, that's all that needs to happen, or can happen.

Ostensibly, it was business as usual for Solich during the week leading up to the Notre Dame game because his dad would have wanted it that way, he said. "I know that if I didn't spend the time that I need to spend in preparation for all of our games, I wouldn't have anybody happy. Anything that would directly affect this game is probably not there as far as my having (outside) obligations."

He met the obligations that go with being in charge of one of the nation's elite college football programs, while maintaining privacy in his intensely personal grief.

"Coach Solich, he did a great job of dealing with that, coming out and coaching a football game and being around

his team while dealing with that whole thing," Crouch said.

"Definitely, that's a tough situation to even talk about. It's something that, in my opinion, doesn't even compare to the game of football when you're thinking about something like that.

"How do you blame a guy who has other things on his mind, when your father passes away?"

The answer is, you don't. Solich carried thoughts of his father as he walked the east sideline during the Troy State game. And he carried those same thoughts during the Notre Dame game.

Chances are, many of his players did, too. A bond not unlike that between fathers and sons can be established between players and coaches. And so the Cornhuskers played with extraordinary emotion against Notre Dame, "without question," said defensive coordinator Craig Bohl.

"Our players really care about Coach Solich. They love him."

Winning or losing doesn't reflect the depth of that caring. That the Cornhuskers won the game they dedicated to their coach was an affirmation of his focus and the preparation that continued. But it couldn't have diminished the personal pain, which was with Solich as much after the victory as before.

Even so, "you couldn't tell anything was wrong. He's been so strong," offensive tackle and co-captain Dave Volk said. "Obviously he had to be going through some emotional turbulence.

"That says so much about his character. I can't say enough about him for that."

The day after the game, Solich was to be in Johnstown, Pa., for his father's funeral. Frank Sr., who had been brought to Lincoln last

November, was to be buried alongside his wife.

On Monday, Solich planned to be back in Lincoln to begin preparing his team to play Rice.

"He's got to put it behind him," said Volk.

Coaching, after all, is "kind of a full-time deal."

No one knows that more than Solich, who turned 57 on game day. His commitment is unconditional. The week leading up to the Notre Dame game provided dramatic evidence. "I found out in this profession that a lot of things make it difficult, and you'd better be able to overcome them," he said.

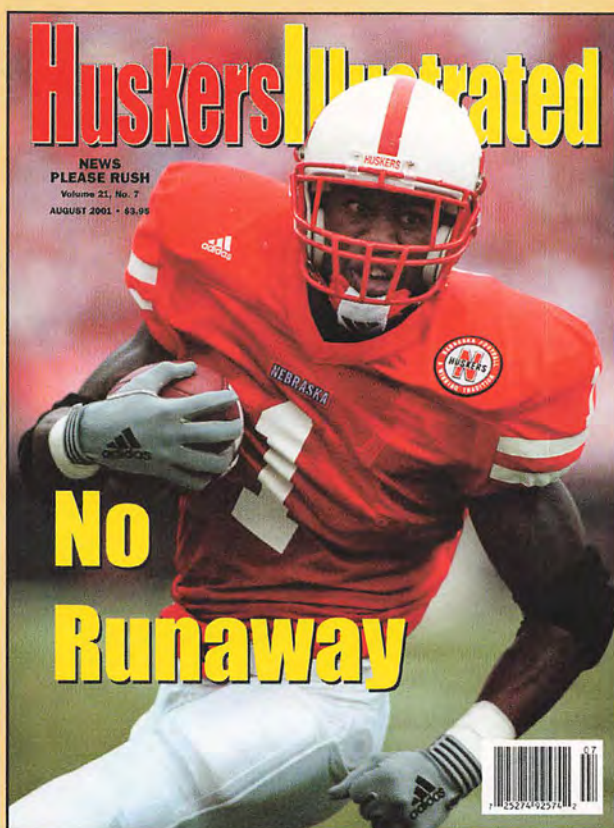
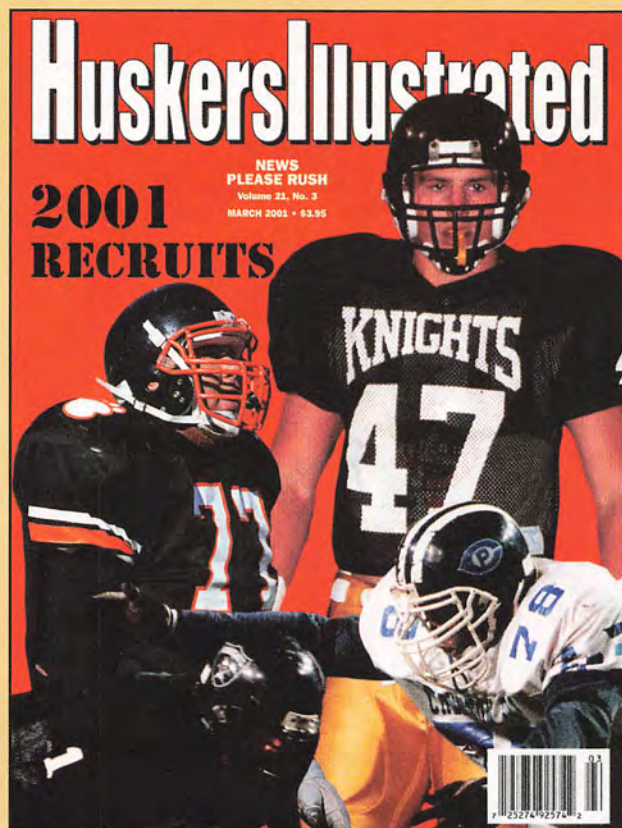
That's a lesson passed down from father to son. ■



**Frank Solich is in his
fourth season as head
coach.**

Mike Babcock is a former sports columnist for the Lincoln Journal Star. He has covered Nebraska football for more than 20 years. Mike can be reached at mdb@inetnebr.com or P.O. Box 6782, Lincoln, NE 68506.

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